THE
CHURCHMAN'S
TEXT BOOK

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AND

Daily Remembrancer of Doctrine and Duty

CONSISTING OF

MEDITATIONS TAKEN FROM THE
WRITINGS OF STANDARD DIVINES FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF
CHRISTIANITY TO THE PRESENT TIME.

Compiled with the Assistance and under the Sanction of Eminent Divines and Dignitaries of the Church.

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"Blessed be God that hath set up so many clear lamps in His Church. Now none but the wilfully blind can plead darkness. And blessed be the memory of those His faithful servants that have left their blood, their spirits, their lives, in their precious papers; and have willingly wasted themselves into those during monuments, to give light unto others."

BISHOP HALL'S Occasional Meditations.

TO THE REVERED MEMORY

OF THE

FATHERS OF THE HOLY CHRISTIAN FAITH

AND

TO THE BISHOPS AND CLERGY

OF THAT PART OF IT CALLED "THE

UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND,"

This Volume is respectfully Dedicated.

PREFACE.

By the Very Rev. W. R. FREMANTLE,
Dean of Ripon.

Among the many Helps to Private Devotion which have been compiled for the use of Christians, the *Churchman's Daily Remembrancer* will be found to possess a value peculiarly its own. It supplies a want which has been long felt and expressed by members of the Church of England; they have never had a compilation of the best thoughts of the best standard Divines of the Church. It will be admitted that in many of the existing Manuals for private meditation, there is an absence of the deep, sober, practical, and Scriptural experience, which belongs to the writings of our Church theologians. In some there will be an excess of doctrinal peculiarity, in others an attempt to exaggerate spiritual emotion, in others an overstrained intellectualism, which, to a mind habituated to the

quiet orthodoxy of the Church of England, fail to inspire that confidence and sympathy which are essential to profitable and edifying thought. No one will for a moment underrate the excellency of such works as those of Bogatzky, Tholuck, Mason, and Arndt, but there is a sphere of broad comprehensiveness which no individual writer upon so vast a subject as that of spiritual experience can attain, and which can only be reached by the aggregation of the testimony of holy men in all ages. It is with this view the present work has been undertaken, and, if a careful selection of choice and appropriate passages, from the writings of more than one hundred authors, extending from Clement and Ignatius to the present day, exhibiting one uniform interpretation of the Word of God, is calculated to kindle a steady and continuous train of thought from day to day, and from month to month, throughout the Ecclesiastical Year, the labours of the compiler will have not been in vain. Such a collection of individual and united testimony is of real importance in the present day, when schism, and indifference, and scepticism, are weakening the faith of many; and they who have not access to the works of our older Divines will be enabled to form a juster estimate of the theology of our Church. They will see how in each succeeding age, in the midst of

heresies and martyrdoms, of declension and progress, the same standard of truth has been maintained through the successive generations of the Apostles, the Fathers, the Reformers, and Ministers of the Church, to the present hour; and will thus appreciate more and more fully, the communion of the body of Christ, and the certainty of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

Of the manner in which the extracts have been made and arranged, it is enough to say, that the work has evidently been the result of much patient thought and labour, and that a wise discrimination marks the order both of the subjects and of the authors. Such a grouping of the pious contemplations of holy and learned men, we may earnestly hope and pray will, by God's blessing, stir up much holy meditation, and help to comfort many an aching heart and quicken many an indolent spirit.

W. R. FREMANTLE.

NOTICE TO THIRD EDITION.

In revising this work for a Third Edition, it has been thought advisable to make some changes in the adaptation of the texts; the use of the new lectionary in the Church rendering the restriction of their being taken from lessons or psalms appointed for each day, no longer availing. Some choice passages from well-known modern Divines have, also, been added to the Meditations; this has been done by suppressing a few extracts of those authors from whose writings more than one had been taken. But in no instance has a name been left out of the index.

The Editor takes this opportunity to acknowledge with gratitude the kindness of those friends, who by their help, counsel, and their books, have materially aided the efforts of the Editor to render the work, not merely a collection of attractive quotations, but a treasury of scriptural counsel profitable for daily use.

March, 1876.

JANUARY 1.

"My days are like a shadow."—Ps. cii. 11.

THE years of our life are but too fitly styled, in Holy Writ, the *days* of our life. Every day added to our life sets us so much nearer to death, as the longer the shadow grows, the day is so much nearer spent. How is it passing away continually! How is it stealing from us, while we are eating, sleeping, talking! How is it shortened even while we are complaining of its shortness! There is nothing that we can either think, speak, or do, but it takes up some time. We cannot purchase so much as a thought, or a word, without the expense of some of our precious moments. It was the consideration of this made the Apostle quicken the Hebrews to *present* duty. "*To-day*, if ye will hear His voice;"—the things of thy peace may be freely held forth to thee *now*, which, for the future, may be set out of thy reach. Consider, therefore, upon what terms thou standest with God, and lose no time: the work is difficult, the delay dangerous, the time short. The Spirit, that to-day "stands at thy door and knocks," may be gone before to-morrow; and when once sent away, no man can assure himself that it will *ever* return.

Robert South, D.D.

Uncertain life, how soon it flies!
  Dream of an hour, how short our bloom!
Like spring's gay verdure now we rise,
  Cut down ere night to fill the tomb.
Teach us to count our short'ning days,
  And with true diligence apply
Our hearts to Wisdom's sacred ways,
  That we may learn to live and die.

JANUARY 2.

"Redeeming the time."—EPH. v. 16.

YOU are entering upon another year, and are pleased with its opening prospects. You say, perhaps, my health is good, my day is bright; and you presume it will never be night. But remember there are only twelve hours in the day. While you are young, I call upon you to regard "the day-spring from on high"—to behold "the Sun of Righteousness;" then, whatever occurs, you will be able to say with David, "God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; and this is all my salvation, and all my desire." I call upon you, while in the prime of life, to own this. Judge of things by this light, for it is the only true light. Lean not to your own understanding; call things as God calls them; and then you will be right. Take care of the *ignis-fatuus*, a fire which, as in nature so in morals, arises from a bog. In the twelfth chapter of St. John you see a consequence: "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth." The wise men followed the star, and it brought them to the place where the young child lay. If you are led by true wisdom, it always leads to Jesus.—*R. Cecil.*

Thou Who didst come to bring
On Thy redeeming wing
  Healing and light,
Health to the sick in mind,
Sight to the inly blind,
O, now to all mankind
  Let there be light.

JANUARY 3.

"To me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—PHIL. i. 21.

"To me, to live is Christ." Have you any clear conception of what this means? Can you lift yourself above the common business and ordinary cares which beset you every day? . . . Is there a great love in your heart for Christ, so that it is strong enough to move you to act for Him, to confess Him before men, to bear rebuke and contempt for His sake, to count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus as your Lord? Are you loving the least of His brethren because they are His? Are you ready to comfort and help them, and share some of your good things with them, not, indeed, counting them yours, but only held in trust for Him? If it be thus with you, all is indeed well, and your life here is one of happy service. And yet your heart will sometimes be visited by "a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better." There are many who wish to die, to be, as they think, out of their misery—"anywhere, anywhere, out of the world." But there may be no yearning after Christ in this. The Apostle wanted to be with Christ; he reckoned it to be far better. Yes, better than the strain and excitement of life; better than its companionships and dearest interests. To go away from all, not slighting the blessings of life, not undervaluing its treasures, but counting "all things but loss for Christ."

T. V. Fosberry.

Which shall I choose—living, to live to Christ,
Or dying, die to him—which shall I choose?
Whichever of the twain shall to Thy glory be,
That, Lord, I pray Thou wilt appoint for me.

JANUARY 4.

"The heavens declare the glory of God."—Ps. xix. 1.

Is it a fine thing to build one's self splendid houses, to have many servants, to lie and gaze at a gilded roof? Why then, assuredly, it is superfluous and unprofitable. For other buildings there are, far brighter and more majestic than these. Wilt thou see the fairest of roofs? At eventide look upon the starred heaven. "But," saith some one, "this roof is not mine." Yet in truth this is more thine than that other. For thee it was made, and is common to thee and to thy brethren; the other is not thine, but theirs, who after thy death inherit it. The one may do thee the greatest service, guiding thee by its beauty to its Creator; the other, the greatest harm, becoming thy accuser at the Day of Judgment, inasmuch as it is covered with gold, while Christ hath not even needful raiment. Let us not be subject to such folly; let us not pursue things which flee away, and flee those which endure; let us not betray our own salvation, but hold fast to our hope of what shall be hereafter; the aged, as certainly knowing that but a little space of life is left them; the young, as well persuaded that what is left is not much—let all instruct one another to desire those things which are to come; through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Chrysostom.

O! may the heavenly vision fire
  Our hearts with ardent love,
Till wings of faith and strong desire
  Bear every thought above.

JANUARY 5.

"I have loved the habitation of Thy house."—Ps. xxvi. 8.

If you love Christ, you love His Ordinances. It is in His Ordinances that Christ more especially meets His people, and manifests Himself unto them. It is in His Ordinances that *He restoreth the souls of His Saints.* They cannot then but love those Ordinances in which they have been quickened, comforted, refreshed. They cannot but desire to "see the power and glory of the Lord, as they have seen them in the sanctuary." What a prominent feature in the character of David was his attachment to the house and worship of the Lord! How bitterly did he lament exclusion from them! How earnestly did he pray for restoration to them! "As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." "O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto Thy Holy Hill, and to Thy Tabernacles." Corresponding with these sentiments of David, if you truly love Christ, will be your sentiments. Though the fervour of your religious affections will too often subside, yet the settled inclination of your heart will accord with that of the Psalmist; with him you will be enabled to say, "Lord, I love the habitation of Thy House, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth."—*E. Cooper.*

The festal morn, my God, is come
That calls me to Thy honour'd dome,
  Thy presence to adore.
My feet the summons shall attend,
With willing steps Thy Courts ascend,
  And tread the hallow'd floor.

JANUARY 6.

Epiphany.

"Yet a little while is the light with you."—JOHN xii. 35.

"LIGHT is now with us." So Christ Himself declared to His disciples, "The light is with you." And so may His ministers this day proclaim to you. You have the light of God's preached Gospel; you have the light of His written Word;—you have the light of prayer, to hold communion with your God;—you have the light of faith to know Him, the light of charity to love Him, the light of hope to have hereafter (as the Collect for this day expresses it) the fruition, that is, the enjoyment of His own most glorious Godhead. Again, you have the light of His Holy Catholic Church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth;—the light of His ministers to counsel you; the light of saints who have gone before you; yea, you have even the beacon light of sinners, who have left the one narrow way, to guard you from suffering your eyes to wander or your feet to slip. . . . Ye, who are old, have received the light which springs from experience of God's providences; you have had to sing a mingled song of mercy and of judgment;—you have been led by a two-fold cord of sorrow and of joy. "Walk as children of Light."—Eph. v. 8.

F. M. Knollis.

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
  Dawn on our darkness and lend us Thine aid;
Star of the east, the horizon adorning,
  Guide where our Infant Redeemer is laid.

JANUARY 7.

"The bow shall be seen in the cloud."—GEN. ix. 14.

ON how many a man has the lovely sight of the rainbow worked the purpose which its Creator designed! As he has looked up and traced its marvellous combination, uniting all colours in one and the same object, how many a man has thrilled with thought too great for utterance, and best interpreted by the palpitating heart and tearful eye! To him it has seemed a visible finger-mark of Omnipotent Deity, asserting thus His abiding power, enduring truth, and never-ending constancy. And if words have come to his aid, as he has gazed on the glorious object radiant with the brilliancy of very heaven, the words preceding the text have been the most approved exponent of his soul's feeling: "I do set My bow in the cloud; and it shall be for a token of a covenant between Me and the earth." The essence then of the rainbow's teaching is confidence in the person, the power, and the goodness of God. Put thy trust in the Lord, it seems to say, with a voice from Heaven, O put thy trust in the Lord!

Thomas Hugo.

When My peaceful bow appears
  Painted on the watery cloud,
'Tis to dissipate thy fears,
  Lest the earth should be o'erflow'd:
'Tis an emblem too of grace,
  Of My covenant love a sign;
Though the mountains leave their place,
  Thou shalt be for ever Mine.

JANUARY 8.

"Forgive us our trespasses."—MATT. vi. 12.

GOD hath caused the sun to rise both upon the just and upon the unjust, but it is to the just alone that the beauty of his rising is wont to bring cheerfulness of countenance and gladness of heart. In the same manner do all the mercies of a benevolent Providence fall unblessed upon the heads and hearts of the unrighteous; and to him that eateth his bread in the bitterness of a spirit wounded with the recollection of unforgiven offences, it will neither give strength to his body nor peace to his mind. . . . From the supply of those temporal wants which are necessary to our *being*, our Saviour, therefore, passes forward to the consideration of those spiritual wants, which are essential to our *well-being* in every state. "Forgive us our trespasses" is the natural language which He dictates to every sinner upon earth; because without the forgiveness of Heaven all other petitions, even if granted, will be of little avail for the purposes of inward and permanent tranquillity.

Christopher Benson.

And need we then, O Lord, repent
  The blessing which we crave,
When thou dost know before we speak
  The thing that we would have?
Mercy, O Lord, mercy we ask,
  This is the total sum;
For mercy, Lord, is all our prayer;
  O let Thy mercy come!

JANUARY 9.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—ROM. vii. 24.

SCARCELY can I conceive even to myself this union between my body and my soul—how is it that I bear upon me the stamp of the Divinity, and that at the same time I grovel in the dust? . . . My body fastens me to the earth. It is an enemy that I love, a treacherous friend whom it is my duty to distrust, to fear, and yet to love! At once, what union and what discord! For what end, with what secret motive, is it that man has been thus organized? Is it not that God has seen it fit by this means to humble our pride, which might otherwise have carried us to the height of disdaining even our Creator, in the thought that, being derived from the same fount of being, we might be permitted to regard ourselves as on terms of equality with Him? It is, then, to recall us incessantly to the sense of our entire dependence on Him, that God has reduced our bodies to this state of frailty, which exposes it to perpetual combats; so that if the excellences of our souls should inspire us with pride, the imperfections inseparable from our bodies may bring us back to humility.

St. Gregory of Nazianzum.

'Tis even so; Thy faithful love
Doth all Thy children's graces prove;
'Tis thus our pride and self must fall
That Jesus may be All in All.

JANUARY 10.

"It is God that justifieth."—ROM. viii. 33.

IF God should lay righteousness to the line, and judgment to the plummet—should take such exceptions as He justly might, at the most holy action that any saint can offer Him; if He should show the conscience how short it falls of that total perfection which His pure eye requires, how many loose thoughts, how much deadness, weariness, irreverence vitiateth our present prayers; how many ignorances, oversights, forgetfulness, worldly intermixtures deface and blemish our brightest actions; how much unbelief exists with the strongest faith; how many thorns and stones cover the best ground, how many weeds do mingle with the purest corn; how much ignorance in the sublimest judgments; how much loss of the seasons and opportunities of grace in the most thrifty redemption of our time; how much want of compassion in our greatest alms; how much self-allowance and dispensation in our smallest errors: if in these, and a world of the like, God should be exact to mark what is done amiss, who were able to stand His presence or abide His coming?—*Bishop Reynolds.*

Though both my prayers and tears combine,
Both worthless are; for they are mine.
But Thou Thy bounteous self still be,
And show Thou art, by saving me.

JANUARY 11.

"Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."—1 Cor. i. 24.

To expect eternal life through a Saviour who died for us, is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian profession; the article, that distinguishes our faith from all others, and with which our religion stands or falls. The New Testament therefore dwells much on the importance of this belief; and especially the Epistles of St. Paul inculcate it everywhere. He determined, though a man of extensive knowledge, not to know any thing among those whom he instructed, to insist on no subject, comparatively speaking, "save Christ Jesus, and Him crucified." Still, both he and the rest of the Apostles must plainly foresee, that the prejudices of many and the pride of all men would find much difficulty in submitting to owe their salvation to another; especially to One, who had lived so poor a life, and suffered so disgraceful a death; which would all be avoided by teaching them to ascribe the whole merit of it to themselves. But, "they had not so learned Christ, as to handle the Word of God deceitfully." They knew that what seemed to human vanity weak and ill-judged was the true and only way to heavenly happiness—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."—*Archbishop Secker.*

Author and Guardian of my life,
Sweet source of light divine,
And (all harmonious names in one)
My Saviour, Thou art mine!

JANUARY 12.

"I will go into Thy house."—Ps. lxvi. 13.

THE happiness, and the blessings that good men enjoy in the public exercise of their religion, and in the worshipping God in His House, and partaking of His sacraments, are so great and many, that they must needs account the being deprived of them, a loss insupportable. Of all the pleasures on this side heaven, those are the most valuable: for they approach nearest to those in which the saints spend their days in their heavenly mansions. What can be more like heaven upon earth, than a company of pious devout souls met in one place, having God in the midst of them, and there partaking of His communications, devoting themselves to His service, professing their faith and hope in Christ, and their dependence upon Him; and joining hearts and voices with the heavenly Hosts of Angels, in singing the everlasting praises of their Creator and Redeemer; in declaring His wonderful works of love and mercy, and in adoring His infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness, which are conspicuous to all the world? He that once tastes the sweets of these, cannot forbear crying out with David, "O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of Hosts!"—*Archbishop Sharp.*

And surely in a world like this,
So rife with woe, so scant of bliss,
Where fondest hopes are oftenest cross'd,
And fondest hearts are sever'd most,
'Tis something that we kneel and pray
With loved ones, near and far away,
One Lord, one Faith, one hope, one care,
One form of words, one hour of prayer.

JANUARY 13.

"His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."—Ps. cxii. 7.

THE heart of a man is not sufficient for self-support, therefore naturally it seeks out some other thing to lean and rest itself on. The unhappiness is, for the most part, that it seeks to things below itself: and these, being so mean and so uncertain, cannot be a firm and certain stay to it. These things are not fixed themselves, how can they fix the heart? The believer only hath this advantage; he hath a rest high enough and sure enough, out of the reach of all hazards. "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." The basis of this happiness is, He trusteth in the Lord. So the heart is fixed; and so fixed, it fears no ill tidings. This trust is grounded on the Word of God, revealing the power and all-sufficiency of God, and withal, His goodness, His offer of Himself to be the stay of souls, commanding us to rest upon Him. O, the sweet calm of such a soul amidst all storms; thus once trusting and fixed, then no more fear, not afraid of evil tidings, nor of any ill hearing! not troubled before trouble with dark and dismal apprehensions, but satisfied in a quiet unmoved expectation of the hardest things. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee." Isa. xxvi. 3.—*Archbishop Leighton.*

O for a closer walk with God,
  A calm and heavenly frame,
A light to shine upon the road
  That leads me to the Lamb.

The dearest idol I have known,
  Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
  And worship only Thee.

JANUARY 14.

"I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God."—ROM. xii. 1.

MERCY is a loving solicitor, and worthy to be heard, because it heareth again. God doth entreat us by the same Mediator that we entreat God; we entreat God for His mercy, and God entreateth us for His mercy. So that mercy is like a sign between us, which calleth God to hear us, and us to hear Him. What will not a good subject do for a merciful prince? Many sweet things are in the Word of God, but the name of mercy is the sweetest word in all the Scriptures, which made David harp upon it twenty-six times in one Psalm—six-and-twenty times he repeats this in the 136th Psalm, "*For His mercy endureth for ever.*" It was such a cheerful note in his ears when he struck upon mercy, that like a bird which is taught to record, when he had sung it, he sung it again, and when he had sung it again, he recorded it again, and made it the burthen of his song, "*For His mercy endureth for ever.*" Like a nightingale, which, when she is in a pleasant vein, quavers, and capers, and trebles upon it, so did David upon His mercy, "*For His mercy endureth for ever.*"—*Henry Smith.*

When nature fails, and day and night
  Divide the world no more,
My ever grateful heart, O Lord,
  Thy *mercy* shall adore;
Thro' all eternity to Thee
  A joyful song I'll raise,
For O! eternity's too short
  To utter all Thy praise.

JANUARY 15.

"Who may stand in Thy sight."—Ps. lxxvi. 7.

WHERESOEVER I am, or whatsoever I am doing, I must still consider the Eye of the Great God as directly intent upon me, viewing and observing all my thoughts, words, and actions, and writing them down in the book of His remembrance; and that all these, unless they be washed out with the tears of repentance, and crossed with the blood of my crucified Saviour, must still remain on record, and be brought into judgment against me at the Great Day. That therefore I may always behave myself as in His presence, it behoves me thoroughly to consider, and be persuaded, not only that my outward man, but even also the secret thoughts, the inward motions and retirements of my soul, all the several windings and turnings of my heart, are exactly known and manifest, as anatomized before Him. He knows what I am now thinking and doing, as well as I do myself; yea, He sees every word whilst it is in my heart, before it be brought forth. He knows all the resolutions I have made, and how often, poor creature! I have broken them already, since I made them. May these thoughts be accompanied with such happy effects, that I may live with God upon earth, and so love and fear His presence in this world, that I may for ever enjoy His glory in the next.—*Bishop Beveridge.*

Could I mount on the wings of the morning away,
To caves of the ocean, unseen by the day,
And hide in the uttermost parts of the sea,
I should there still be living and moving in Thee.

JANUARY 16.

"Why dost thou judge thy brother?"—ROM. xiv. 10.

WHY indeed do any of us judge others, seeing we must all be judged ourselves? It is not seemly, it is not expedient, for those who soon must be arraigned, and answer for themselves, to be busy in questioning and prejudging others, but rather to spend their care in preparing for their own account. Nothing indeed more causes us to neglect our own case, or to leave our own faults unobserved and uncorrected, than this habit. It is easy to observe, that as they who are most gentle and sparing in censure, are usually most exempt from blame, for that carefully reflecting upon their own infirmities, they have less time to scan the imperfections of others, and therefore have less will to be severe towards them; so the most censorious are usually the most slow in discerning, and the most careless in retrenching their own faults,—for the actions of other men take up their attention, so that they cannot attend to themselves. They who are the strictest judges of their own, are the fairest interpreters of other men's actions; and they who least pardon others, most readily excuse themselves. Our Saviour therefore says to such persons, "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."—*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*

Rebuke the sin, but yet in love rebuke,
  Feel as one member in another's pain;
Wean back the soul that His fair path forsook,
  And mighty and eternal is the gain.

JANUARY 17.

"Lord, help me."—MATT. xv. 25.

THIS was the cry of the Syro-Phœnician woman when she followed our Lord into the house where He abode, and fell prostrate at His feet. O faithful daughter of an unbelieving race! great is the example which the afflicted have in thee, of an unshaken confidence in that mercy which ordereth all things for the good of them that fear God. . . . The mercy shown by the edification which is conveyed in the manner in which the favour was conferred, was rendered a blessing to the whole Church; inasmuch as it was the seal of the merit of the righteousness of faith—of that faith which consists in a trust in God, and a reliance on His mercy, founded on a just sense of His perfections. It was a seal of the acceptance of the penitent, and of the efficacy of their prayers; and a seal of this important truth, that the afflictions of the righteous are certain signs of God's favour—the more certain in proportion as they are more severe. Whenever, therefore, the memory of this first occurs, let every heart and every tongue join in praise and thanksgiving to the merciful Lord, for the cure of the young demoniac on the Tyrian border—with which was recorded the encomium, "O woman, great is thy faith! Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."—*Bishop Horsley.*

Faith's meanest deed more favour bears,
  Where hearts and wills are weigh'd,
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
  Which bloom their hour, and fade.

JANUARY 18.

"The things which are not seen."—2 COR. iv. 18.

WE read of a certain Christian youth, of the early days of Christianity, who, on being asked how he had borne the ordeal of persecution, so that neither a cry nor a groan escaped him? answered, "It was most painful, but an angel stood by me when my anguish was at the worst, and with his finger pointed to heaven." O thou, whoever thou art, that art tempted to commit a sin, do thou think on death, and that thought will be an angel to thee: the hope of heaven will raise thy courage above the fiercest threatenings of the world; the fear of hell will rob its persuasions of their enchantments; and the very extremity of thy trial may itself contribute to animate thy exertions by the thought, that the greater thy endeavour now, the greater will be thy reward hereafter. The wildest temptations must shortly have an end; the most bitter cup, when drained to the dregs, will trouble thee no more. These things are temporal, but the hope which is visible to the eye of faith is unfading, eternal, heavenly. . . . The good angel points to heaven, and One greater than the angel will, ere long, fulfil his promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—*Bishop Heber.*

My soul, there is a country, afar beyond the stars,
Where stands a wingèd sentry, all skilful in the wars;
There, above noise and danger, sweet peace sits crown'd with smiles,
And One, born in a manger, commands the beauteous files.

JANUARY 19.

"The Lord reigneth: let the people tremble."—Ps. xcix. 1.

THERE is in some professors of the Gospel an unhallowed familiarity with the sacred name of God, which makes some of their brethren tremble. They seem to forget both His character and their own; to forget that He is that High and Mighty One who inhabiteth eternity, and they sink almost to a level with the brutes that perish. They seem as though they thought it a mark of a high degree of grace to bring down Jehovah from His lofty throne, and to degrade Him to a level with themselves. Beware, my brother, of this unholy boldness. It is not the offspring of grace, but of ignorance and pride. We stand before the throne of God as sinners; what we ask for there is mercy; and surely the conviction that we are sinners, and need mercy, ought to fill us with humility, with reverence, and godly fear. We are criminals suing for a pardon; our boldness then must be the boldness of an humble penitent, cherishing in his heart a lively sense of his unworthiness, and a deep conviction of his guilt. Let us go to Him as children to a forgiving, tender-hearted, yea, a Heavenly Father. The Lord loves the humble, reverential boldness of the child, much more than He loves the trembling of the slave.—*C. Bradley.*

Holy, holy, holy! cry
Angels round Thy throne on high:
Lord of all the heavenly powers,
Be the same loud anthem ours.

JANUARY 20.

"Christ and Him crucified."—1 COR. ii. 2.

CHRIST crucified is the library which triumphant souls will be studying to all eternity. This is the only library which to commend—other knowledge is apt to swell men into high conceits and opinions of themselves, this brings them to the truest view of themselves, and thereby to humility and sobriety; other knowledge leaves men's hearts as it found them, this alters them and makes them better;—so transcendent an excellency is there in the knowledge of Christ crucified, above the sublimest speculations in the world. And is not this an inestimable benefit we enjoy by the Scripture, that therein we can read and converse with all those expressions of God's love and goodness, and that in His own language? . . . And as the goodness of God is thus discovered in Scripture, so is His justice and holiness: we have therein recorded the most remarkable judgments of God upon contumacious sinners, the exactest precepts of holiness in the world. If therefore acquaintance with the nature, perfection, designs of so excellent a being as God is, be a thing desirable to human nature, we have the greatest cause to admire the excellency, and adore the fulness of the Scriptures, which give so large, rational, and complete account of the being and attributes of God.—*Bishop Stillingfleet.*

Jesu, Thou joy of loving hearts!
  Thou Fount of Life! Thou Light of men!
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
  We turn unfill'd to Thee again.

JANUARY 21.

"Seek His face evermore."—Ps. cv. 4.

THE light of nature, even alone, teaches us to desire communion with our Maker. If we study and admire God's works, and consider the investigation of natural phenomena the noblest of intellectual employments, how much more wondrous and elevating must be the contemplation of Himself, the great Being, in whom all the wisdom and the beauty and sublimity of creation originate. And if the thought should occur that the Omnipotent Disposer of thousands of worlds is too exalted to look down upon frail mortals, or to regard their supplications, we call to mind that He is Omnipresent and Omniscient; as able to hear and answer the prayers of all flesh, as if each individual were the only object of His care. But the Almighty has not left us to the inferences of unassisted reason on this subject. He reveals Himself as the hearer of prayer. He encourages, He exhorts, He commands us to approach Him with our supplications. His declaration through His beloved Son is, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."—*Archdeacon Sinclair.*

Out of our gloom we call thee,
Out of our helpless night:
Sun of the world, sweet Saviour,
Show us Thy perfect light.

JANUARY 22.

"He maketh the storm a calm."—Ps. cvii. 29.

THERE is a ship in which we are all embarked; there is a troubled sea, on which we all sail; there are storms, by which we are all frequently overtaken; and there is a haven, which we all desire to behold, and to enter. For the Church is a ship; the world is a sea; temptations, persecutions, and afflictions are the waves of it, the prince of the power of the air is the stormy wind which raises them; and Heaven is the only port of rest and security. Often during the voyage, for our punishment, or our trial, God permitteth us to be thus assaulted. The succession and the violence of our trouble, the elevations and depressions of mind and fortune, the uncertainty of our counsels, and our utter inability to help ourselves, are finely represented by the multitude and impetuosity of the waves, the tossings and agitations of the vessel, the confusion, terror, and distress among the sailors. In both cases prayer is the proper effect, and only remedy left. Then will *He* arise, and rebuke the waves, saying unto them, "Peace, be still." "He will make the storm a calm," and bring us in peace, and joy, and gladness, "to our desired haven."

Bishop Horne.

Then once more pray;
  Down with thy knees, up with thy voice;
Seek pardon first; and God will say,
  "Glad heart, rejoice."

JANUARY 23.

"Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord."—Ps. cxii. 1.

LET us take a little of the character of this blessed man. Who is it that is thus undaunted? The man that feareth God. Fear sounds rather contrary, hath an air of misery; but add whom? He that feareth the Lord: that touch turns it into gold. He that so fears, fears not: he shall not be afraid; all petty fears are swallowed up in this great fear. And this great fear is as sweet and pleasing as little fears are anxious and vexing. Secure of other things, he can say, "If my God be pleased, no matter who is displeased; no matter who despise me, if He account me His. Though all forsake me, though my dearest friends grow estranged, if He reject me not, that is my only fear; and for that I am not perplexed, I know He will not." A believer hath no fear but of the displeasure of Heaven, the anger of God to fall upon him, he accounts that only terrible, but yet he doth not fear it, doth not apprehend it will fall on him, is better persuaded of the goodness of God. So this fear is still joined with trust, "Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy." Psalm xxxiii. 18.

Archbishop Leighton.

Fear Him, ye saints, and you will then
  Have nothing else to fear;
Make you His service your delight,
  He'll make your wants His care.

JANUARY 24.

"I am a stranger in the earth."—Ps. cxix. 19.

AND was it then peculiar to the son of Jesse, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, to be so? No, surely; it is a character in which every son of Adam appears and acts upon the stage of life. We have all a home; but that home is in Heaven. We are strangers in the earth; we are here in a foreign land, through which we travel to our native country, there to possess everlasting habitations. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews having in the eleventh chapter celebrated the Old Testament worthies, sums up the account thus:—"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." A consideration thus striking and affecting cannot be without its use in the regulation of our conduct; and I have somewhere read of a pious old man, who being desired by a young disciple to give him some short precepts which might serve, at all times, for the direction of his conduct through life, replied—"Only remember that you are a stranger in the earth."

Bishop Horne.

So grant me, God, from earthly care,
  From pride and passion free,
Aloft through faith and love's pure air,
  To hold my course to Thee:
No lure to tempt, no art to stay
  My soul as home she springs,
Thy sunshine on her joyful way,
  Thy freedom on her wings.

JANUARY 25.

Conversion of St. Paul.

"I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."—ACTS ix. 5.

THE history of St. Paul's Conversion can hardly be noticed, even by the least attentive hearer or reader, without very solemn reflections on the freedom and riches of God's grace, which could turn so quickly and so completely the persecutor into an Apostle, and bend his hard heart and stubborn will to do and suffer all things for a cause to which he had so long done all the injury in his power. But while we thus wonder at the secrets of the Divine mercy, shall we not do wisely to ask ourselves if we have never felt the same spirit by which Paul was sanctified, working in our hearts, though not in a manner equally miraculous, to save our souls from the destroyer? Have we felt no rising sense of guilt—no inward wish to partake, with God's people, the blessings which Christ's blood bestows, no struggling inclinations to amend our ways, and to give ourselves up to His service? Oh! as you would have mercy in the day of wrath, harden not your hearts against these gracious feelings! They are the voice of the same God who spake to Paul in his way to Damascus: and he who despiseth that voice, despiseth the Lord who died for him.—*Bishop Heber.*

"Ah! wherefore persecute ye Me?
'Tis hard ye so in love should be
With your own endless woe.
Know, though at God's right hand I live,
I feel each wound ye reckless give
To the least saint below."

JANUARY 26.

"I hate vain thoughts."—Ps. cxix. 113.

THE grand secret in avoiding "vain thoughts" is *employment.* An empty house is everybody's property. All the vagrants about the country will take up their quarters in it. Always, therefore, have something to do, and you will always have something to think of. God has placed every person in some station; and every station has a set of duties belonging to it. Did we not forget or neglect these, evil thoughts would sue for admission in vain. Indeed, they would not come near our dwelling any more than idle, vain, profligate people would think of visiting and teasing a man who laboured constantly for his daily bread. If there be any one who is of opinion that his station does not find him employment, or that it privileges him to be idle, let him only suppose, for a moment, that when his soul shall quit his body, and appear before God, he be asked the two following questions:—Whether he could not have done more good in the world? and, Why he did not?—*Bishop Horne.*

Full of vows, and full of labours,
  All our days fresh duties bring,
First to God, and then our neighbour—
  Christian, Life's an earnest thing.

Onward—ever onward pressing,
  Yet untired as Angel's wing;
Believing, doing, blest, and blessing,
  Christian, Life's an earnest thing.

JANUARY 27.

"Her ways are ways of pleasantness."—PROV. iii. 17.

THERE is no faculty or passion of the mind which may not be as ardently excited, and called out to as high endeavour and generous exertion, by what it sees and enjoys of divine things, as by the impressions which it receives from what St. Paul calls, with a high contempt, the *beggarly elements* of this world: it should be supposed, indeed, far more so; as the flame is brighter, the more pure the air is in which it burns. Religion, therefore, cramps none of the mental energies; on the contrary, the ease and celerity with which the renewed soul acts in the ways of God, evidence the machine to be returning to order. Indeed, what reason can possibly be assigned why even the lively cheer of youth should not find exercise in activity for a Creator, and love toward a dying Saviour? why a pure and peaceful mind should not be as pleasurable as a vain defiled heart? a growing meetness for heaven, as productive of satisfaction as rising into consequence and wealth? and the favour of God, as gratifying as the smiles of a deceitful world?—Be persuaded, at least, to try whether, by the conversion which the Son of God can work in you, and the life of serious piety to which He can lead you, there is not real pleasure to be found.—*Henry Martyn.*

Holy habits are thy joy,
  Wisdom's pleasant ways;
Yielding good without alloy,
  Lengthening too thy days.
Seek them, Christian, night and morn,
  Seek them noon and even;
Seek them "till thy soul be borne
  Sinless up to heaven."

JANUARY 28.

"Doth God take care for oxen?"—1 COR. ix. 9.

GOD made man the Lord of His creatures, not the tyrant. When the Apostle asks, "Doth God take care for oxen?" can we think he meant to question the regard that God hath for so useful a creature? Do we not hear the Psalmist say, "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens that cry"? Do we not hear our Saviour say, that "not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Heavenly Father"? Even the young lions seek their meat from God, and He gives it them in due season. "He openeth His hand, and filleth every creature with good." Is God so careful for preserving, and shall man be so licentious in destroying them? "A righteous man," saith Solomon, "regardeth the life of his beast." He is no better than a wicked man, therefore, that regardeth it not. . . . Surely no other measure should a man offer to his beast than that which he could well justify, if his beast, like Balaam's, could expostulate with him; no other cruelty than that man, if he had been made a beast, would have been content should have been offered by man to him; no other than he shall so expect to answer for to a common Creator.

Bishop Hall.

O! turn thy foot aside,
  Crush not a helpless worm;
Let not thy human pride deride
  Its lowly form!
The shadow of sin's woe
  On "all creation" see;
Such mercy to the *sinless* show
  As God shows thee!

JANUARY 29.

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."—
MATT. xxvi. 38.

THE death-bed of the just is not always peaceful; nor the prospect of heaven granted beforehand to every one who will be suffered at last to enjoy it in reality. It is, therefore, a most gracious instance of our Lord's exceeding love to us, that He Himself drank the cup of human suffering to the very bottom; that no servant of Christ's can fear his death so painfully, or feel himself so forsaken and miserable, whilst actually undergoing it, as his Master did before him. This, then, is one use we may draw from the account of Christ's agony before death, and in death; to assure ourselves that a peaceful end of their mortal life is not the appointed portion of all God's servants; and to prevent us from doubting of the salvation of the good man, because God's countenance was hidden from him on earth, even to the last. For ourselves also, should it please our Lord to afflict us with this trial, it may help to support us under it, if, while in health, we call to mind that Christ Himself has borne the same. "In all our affliction He was afflicted."

Thos. Arnold, D.D.

He proved them all!—the doubt, the strife,
  The faint perplexing dread,
The mists that hang o'er parting life,
  All gather'd round His head;
And the Deliverer knelt to pray—
Yet pass'd it not, that cup, away!

JANUARY 30.

"Judge in yourselves."—1 COR. xi. 13.

WE offend God, our Heavenly Father, whenever "we leave undone those things which we ought to do; or do those things which we ought not to do." Here we can judge ourselves. The Bible—the gift which is free alike to the poor and the rich, the unlearned and the learned, the simple and the wise, to subjects and to rulers—the Bible, with equal clearness and power, marks out the line of duty which every man should pursue in that state of life to which it may please God to call him. There we find golden rules for a good and righteous life, in sickness and in health, in riches and in poverty, in lowliness and in power. Thus, wherever we have omitted to do right, or persisted in doing wrong, we may "judge ourselves." Whilst we continued in error and wrong, there was no "health in us"—no *spiritual* health. We had no energy for the duties of a spiritual life. As the sick body refuses its wonted exertions in the concerns of this world, so the sick soul has no power for its appointed work in preparing for the next world.—It languishes in sins either of omission or commission.—From a state so sad, Thy mercy, O God, alone can set us free.

J. J. James.

Supported by the word,
  Though in himself a worm,
The servant of the Lord
  Can wondrous acts perform.
Without dismay he boldly treads
Where'er the path of duty leads.

JANUARY 31.

"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."—MATT. xxviii. 20.

A CHRISTIAN, we are here taught, is one who observes all things that Christ has commanded. It is well to bring the matter down sometimes from the region of affection, of feeling, even of persuasion and conviction itself, to this plain and simple criterion. Are we observing all things whatsoever Christ has commanded us? What is implied in this? Of course, in the first place, that we habitually study Christ's teaching, in other words, that we read the Book which contains it; and that, with a practical object—in the spirit of the question, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" And next, that having learnt His will—having imbibed from the study of His teaching that new knowledge, those new principles, which He enforced and in His own person exemplified—we should then set ourselves to act upon these, treasure them up in our hearts every morning, call them to mind all the day long, and at night try to examine our temper, conduct, and words that day, by the test so required. . . . Which of us endeavours so to do? Which of us makes it his business, first to learn the will of Christ, and then to do it? Which of us makes any real effort to do this? and which of us is grieved and disappointed when, in any part, he has failed to accomplish it? That man, and he only, is a Christian indeed.

C. J. Vaughan, D.D.

In little things of common life,
There lies the Christian's noblest strife—
When he does conscience make
Of every thought and throb within,
And words and looks of self and sin
Crushes for Jesus' sake.

FEBRUARY 1.

"He will keep the feet of His saints."—1 SAM. ii. 9.

GOD has a sovereign right to do with us as He pleases; and if we consider what we are, surely we shall confess we have no reason to complain; and to those who seek Him, His sovereignty is exercised in a way of grace. All shall work together for good; everything is needful that He sends; nothing can be needful that He withholds. Be content to bear the cross; others have borne it before you. You have need of patience; and if you ask, the Lord will give it; but there can be no settled peace till our will is in a manner subdued. Hide yourself under the shadow of His wings; rely upon His care and power; look upon Him as a physician who has graciously undertaken to heal your soul of the worst of sicknesses, sin. Yield to his prescriptions, and fight against every thought that would represent it as desirable to be permitted to choose for yourself. When you cannot see your way, be satisfied that He is your leader. When your spirit is overwhelmed within you, He knows your path, He will not leave you to sink. He has appointed seasons of refreshment, and you shall find He does not forget you. Above all, keep close to the throne of grace.—*John Newton.*

Thou best dost understand,
  Lord God! my needing,
And placed is in Thy hand
  My fortune's speeding,
And Thou foresee'st what is for me most fitting.
  Be still then, O my soul!
  To manage in the whole,
    Thy God permitting.

FEBRUARY 2.

Purification.

"Fulfil all righteousness."—MATT. iii. 15.

THE circumstance in the life of the mother of our Lord to which this festival points, teaches us obedience to all the lawful injunctions of the Church and country whereof we are members. Though there was no impurity in the birth of our Saviour, and the blessed Virgin contracted no pollution by bringing Him forth; yet, being "born under the law," they submitted to it, "to fulfil all righteousness;" and so observed the laws that were required of others upon the like occasion. Obedience to authority is a necessary duty, even when the rites it requires are not otherwise necessary, than merely by being enjoined: so did the Son of God here, and so did His blessed mother; and so, by their example, ought we to do likewise. . . . From the purification of the Virgin Mother, we may also learn to purify ourselves both in body and soul, and to practise that holiness and purity, together with that obedience which our Saviour and the blessed Virgin have taught us by their own examples, and from them learn to be "meek and lowly in heart." Lastly, let us learn from good old Simeon's sacred hymn on this event, never to think of dying in peace till we have embraced our Saviour with our understandings and affections, and heartily believe and practise what He hath revealed and taught us.—*Matthew Hole, D.D.*

Lord Jesus, God and man,
  For love of men, a child;
The very God, yet born on earth
  Of Mary undefiled;
O joy to live for Thee!
  O joy in Thee to die!
O very joy of joys to see
  Thy face eternally!

FEBRUARY 3.

"O death, where is thy sting?"—1 COR. xv. 55.

MANY have disquieted themselves in vain, by anticipating the last conflict with the last enemy. But what saith the Scripture? "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." What says the experience of the saints of God from first to last, who have been gathered into the kingdom? It is one unvarying testimony to the faithfulness of God. "When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." And whence is this, but from the fact too often overlooked, that death cannot separate or cut in twain the stream of life which flows into the soul from our Fountain-Head? The life which we live in the flesh is the life of Christ: it is eternal life. "I give unto them eternal life." "I am the resurrection and the life. He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." "If a man keep My sayings, he shall never taste of death." We may indeed pass through the dark caverns of the grave, but the soul sees the light of life throughout the passage; and when the moment arrives for its departure, can sing in the language of the following lines.

Dean Fremantle.

"I'm going home! Prepare the bridal wreath;
My Saviour bids my happy spirit come;
Damp not with tears the Christian's bed of death;
Rejoice! I'm going home!

"I see the city of the blest on high,
With the freed spirit's ken. I come—I come!
Ye calling voices, catch my heart's reply,
Home—home! I'm going home!"

FEBRUARY 4.

"Stand fast in the faith."—1 COR. xvi. 13.

THERE is nothing in our life which suffereth so many eclipses and changes as our devotion; hot and cold, in and out, off and on. If we see good, it puts us in a good thought; if we see or hear evil, it turns us from good to evil again. Thus man is rolled upon a wheel that never stands still, but turns continually about, as though he were giddy and treading in a maze. He is upon the side of a hill, where it is easy to slide, and hard to get up. Therefore the Apostle, moved with pity, seeing man stand upon such slippery ground, as it were in a ship ready to sink, or a house bending to fall, he crieth to them that stand, "*Take heed lest ye fall;*" that is, when thou hast put on thy "armour of light," and art in the spiritual field to fight the Lord's battles against the world, the flesh, and the devil, turn not back like Demas, but remember the comfort of Elisha, that there be "more with thee than against thee," and that the tempter can overcome none but those which yield. . . . Therefore the Holy Ghost crieth so often, "Be faithful even unto death:" "Be not weary in well doing."

Henry Smith.

Weak as you are, you shall not faint,
  Or fainting, shall not die;
Jesus, the strength of every saint,
  Will aid you from on high.

FEBRUARY 5.

"A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench."—MATT. xii. 20.

WE see at once the persons intended by this description, as well as how Christ shall deal with them. They are those who are wanting in force of religious character; or those who, through the threatening difficulties of the religious life, are becoming wearied and faint in their minds; or those in whom good and evil tendencies have long been contending for supremacy, and the good are well nigh overmastered, and are ready to die. And how will Christ deal with them? Will He break the reed at the point of its bruising? or will He, by repelling and cold discouragement, crush out the life of the remaining spark? No; there is divinity in that spark. "For thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it, so will I do, for My servants' sake." I will quicken into life the faintest breath of spiritual desire, I will draw out into action the first-formed conception of holy purpose. I will take part with the least and last remainder of good I find in the heart, until the mists of corruption shall be scattered from about the lamp of God, and the once bruised reed shall resound again with thanksgiving and the voice of melody.—*Daniel Moore.*

Safe in Thy sanctifying grace,
  Almighty to restore,
Borne onward—sins and death behind,
  And love and life before.
Oh, let my soul abound in hope,
  And praise Thee more and more!

FEBRUARY 6.

"My times are in Thy hand."—Ps. xxxi. 15.

It is the Lord that appoints the time, the manner, and the place of our departure; and He determines these by rules of unsearchable wisdom, as well as of love. There are undoubtedly great and wise reasons, why the death of every saint is appointed at this or that particular season, in this or that particular manner; why some trees of righteousness are soon removed from the world, and transplanted into the paradise of God green and young, while others are suffered to remain here to a good old age, and are not removed till they can no longer grow on the earth. These reasons, however, are at present hidden from our eyes; but what we know not now, we shall know hereafter, and in the meanwhile, all things are working together for our good. With this assurance let us be satisfied. Our times are in the Lord's hands; He measures out every day to us; and will not allow death to touch us, till the hour He appoints for our change is come. Our Bibles tell us that He disposes of the meanest concerns of our life; how much more then of life itself! Let us strive to be able to say with believing David—"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me."—*C. Bradley.*

Father, I know that all my life
  Is portion'd out for me,
And the changes that will surely come
  I do not fear to see;
But I ask Thee for a present mind
  Intent on pleasing Thee.

FEBRUARY 7.

"Trust in the Lord, and do good."—Ps. xxxvii. 3.

THERE is no condition in the world so mean and despicable, but yields us opportunities of doing good. There is neither old nor young, man nor woman, rich nor poor, high nor low, learned nor unlearned, but in their sphere, by a good husbandry of those talents God has entrusted to their care, they may be very useful to others, and prove instruments of much good in their generation. This truth St. Paul most elegantly sets forth when he compares the society of Christians to a natural body. He shows us that as in the natural body there are many members, and all these members have not the same dignity and honour, nor the same use and office; yet every member has its own particular use by which it does real service to the body: so it is with the Church of Christ, and with every body politic. There must be a variety of functions and callings, and degrees and conditions, and yet there is not one of these but may be as useful as any that belong to the society. To "do good" is the most certain means to procure the blessing of God upon our endeavours, and to entitle ourselves to His more especial care and providence. "Trust in the Lord," saith David, "and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."—*Archbishop Sharp.*

Meekly upon His will to wait,
In little things as well as great;
Contented in our lot to rest,
'Tis thus the Christian serves Him best.

FEBRUARY 8.

"Delivered unto death for Jesus' sake."—2 COR. iv. 11.

THE Philistine held not David in greater contempt than was poured upon the Apostles by the scribe and the disputer of this world. But they went to the attack as David did, in the name of the Lord of Hosts; and therefore the spear and the shield were of no account against them. . . . The strongholds of false knowledge could not stand before the Gospel, and human imagination was soon captivated to the obedience of Christ. But what was it that gained this victory over the pride of earth and hell? What but the same all-suffering, and therefore all-subduing charity, which taught the disciples of a Crucified Jesus, after His example, to endure all things for the salvation of their brethren? Inspired by that love, they counted all things but loss, that they might win souls to Christ. They renounced all riches but the riches of grace; they sought no pleasure but that of doing their duty; and thought it honour sufficient to serve God. The lamp kindled in their hearts by the celestial fire of charity never went out; the waters of affliction could not quench it, nor the floods of persecution drown it; and when the fury of the oppressor broke the earthen vessel that contained it, then was their victory, like that of Gideon, complete.

Bishop Horne.

Thus they who in the Lord confide,
Though foes assault on every side,
Cannot be moved or overthrown;
For Jesus makes their cause His own.

FEBRUARY 9.

"The love of Christ constraineth us."—2 COR. v. 14.

IT was love alone, free and unmerited love, which brought Christ down to the earth. It was love, which caused Him to dwell in this accursed world as a Man of Sorrows, and to take so large a share of its degradation and miseries. It was love, which made Him so willing to be despised and rejected by men, and to be bruised and put to grief by His God. It was love, which enabled Him to bear the exceeding great trouble of His soul in the garden, and the racking agonies of the Cross. All that He suffered for us when on earth, and all that He has been since doing for us in heaven, He has done and suffered solely for this one reason, because He loved us. . . . But the love of Christ influences the conduct of His servants, as well as excites their affections. It not only makes them *feel*, it makes them *act* for Christ. It teaches them to do good, as well as to praise and to pray. It changes their life as well as their heart. Let us entreat the Father of Mercies to open our hearts to the humbling influence of His life-giving Spirit. Then shall we experience the transforming power of the love of Christ; the efficacy of that grace, which brings to the soul righteousness and peace, pardon and salvation.—*C. Bradley.*

O Love! who once in Time was slain,
Pierced through and through with bitter woe;
O Love! who wrestling thus didst gain
That we eternal joy might know:
O Love! I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be!

FEBRUARY 10.

"Show me Thy glory."—EXOD. xxxiii. 18.

WE shall go to those who sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because being asked to the supper, they made no excuse. We shall go where there is a paradise of pleasure; where the wretched being who "fell among thieves" no longer weeps over his wounds, where the thief himself rejoices in the participation of the heavenly kingdom, where there shall be no more storms or vicissitudes, but the glory of God alone shall shine. We shall go where Jesus has prepared mansions for His servants. The will of Christ is the same as the performance. That we may know His true will, He hath said, "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." We follow Thee, Lord Jesus, but draw us that we may follow; no one rises without Thee; open to us Thy good, which David desired to see, when he said, "I believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Show us that good which is in its nature unchangeable, and which, when we arrive at heaven, we shall never cease to acknowledge and approve. Let us seek Jesus, that He may say to us, "Fear not, I am the remission of sins; I am the light, I am the life."—*St. Ambrose.*

Thou shalt see My glory soon,
When the work of grace is done;
Partner of My Throne shalt be—
Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?

Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee and adore—
Oh, for grace to love Thee more.

FEBRUARY 11.

"Godly sorrow worketh repentance."—2 COR. vii. 10.

PIOUS tears, a serious deploring of former iniquities, and a just care of living a better life, with all other pious exercises, are things which we do not thrust away, nor put out of their place: only we search what is the place, what is the peculiar office of those things. And in the first place, this should not be doubted of by any man—that repentance, as it is an excellent gift of God, so it brings forth fruits not to be repented of, according to its office. The office or duty whereof I reckon to be two-fold: the first, is that which duly detests the sins committed; the other, that, which diligently endeavours the reformation of the life, from which follow both great praise and greater fruits. . . . Nothing that we can do is sufficient to bring this to pass, but only faith in the Son of God. And therefore repentance with charity, and other offices of that kind, have a necessary connexion with faith; not that they may give form to this, as to a dead matter, but that rather they may receive life and spirit from it.—*Foxe.*

. . . You have been wretched; yet
The silver shower, whose reckless burden weighs
Too heavily upon the lily's head,
Oft leaves a saving moisture at its root.

FEBRUARY 12.

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."—Ps. xlii. 2.

GOD is gentle and of much mercy, and loves the courteous, the gentle, the lowly, and the merciful. Love Him who drew thee out of the lake of misery, and from the miry clay. Choose Him for thy friend above all thine other friends; for when all things are taken from thee, He alone will keep faith with thee. In the day of thy burial, when all thy friends depart from thee, He will not forsake thee. But He will defend thee from those who roar like lions ready for their prey, and conduct thee through an unknown country, and lead thee onward to the streets of the heavenly Sion, and will place thee with the angels before the face of His Majesty, where thou shalt hear the song of the angels, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."

There is the music of gladness, the voice of joy and health, and of giving of thanks, the voice of praise and alleluia for ever. . . . O my soul, sigh ardently, desire vehemently, that thou mayest arrive at the city which is above. The soul that loves, ascends frequently, and visits the heavenly Jerusalem. Heaven and earth, and all things that are therein, cease not to tell me to love the Lord my God.—*St. Augustine.*

For Thee, my God, the living God,
My thirsty soul doth pine;
O when shall I behold thy face,
Thou Majesty Divine!

FEBRUARY 13.

"Prepare to meet thy God."—AMOS iv. 12.

To be always ready, and prepared to meet his God, is the happy frame and temper of mind which is formed in the believer by faith working by love. He believes, therefore he watches; his faith is operative, therefore it keeps him watchful. It is a faith working by love, therefore it makes him love to watch. He loves God, and finds a heaven of joy in loving Him; and therefore he waits with steadfast hope for the blessed time when he shall be filled with love. Oh! what must it be to see and love God in glory, when but a ray of Divine love darted into the soul at present brings with it such pure and spiritual delight as makes all the joys of the world fade into nothing? Happy is that faithful and wise servant whom his Lord when He comes shall find so doing.—*William Romaine.*

O happy servant he,
  In such a posture found!
He shall his Lord with rapture see,
  And be with honour crowned.

FEBRUARY 14.

"Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed."—
MARK xiv. 21.

IT is innocence which enables eloquence to rebuke with power; and guilt attacked flies before the face of him who has none. And therefore, as every rebuke of vice comes, or should come, from the preacher's mouth like a dart or arrow, thrown by some mighty hand which does execution proportionately to the force or impulse it received from that which threw it; so, our Saviour's matchless virtue, free from the least tincture of anything immoral, armed every one of his reproofs with a piercing edge, and an irresistible force, so that truth never came naked out of His mouth, but either clothed with thunder or wrapped up in all the powers of persuasion. His person animated and gave vigour to His expression; all His commandments being but the transcripts of Himself, and His sermons a living paraphrase of His own life.

Bishop Butler.

Lo! Heaven's doors lift up, revealing
How Thy judgments earthward move,
Scrolls unfolded, trumpets pealing,
Wine-cups from the wrath above;
Yet o'er all a soft voice stealing—
"Little children, trust and love!"

FEBRUARY 15.

"Thy footsteps are not known."—Ps. lxxvii. 19.

Is the thought of the vast extent of human ignorance revolting to any one? Let him recollect the time when he was a child, and refresh his memory by observation of other children. Let him remember how strange things appeared to him which are now perfectly cleared up; how utterly ignorant he was of matters which are now quite familiar to him; how far he was from being able to comprehend the nature, or even to suspect the existence, of many things which now principally occupy his thoughts. How unaccountable seemed some of the proceedings of his parents, and how unreasonable were some of their commands; and, above all, how sure he was to fall into mistakes whenever he presumed to fancy that his own notions were adequate, and his knowledge complete. This habitual study of the infantile mind will prepare us to go any length in the consciousness of our ignorance and the due distrust of our faculties. We shall thus become learned in human nature, and where full and accurate knowledge is not to be obtained, we shall at least keep clear of presumptuous error. When darkness cannot be removed, it is a great point to be aware that it is darkness, and not to be misled by false lights.—*Archbishop Whately.*

What if much be still unknown?—
  The Lord shall teach thee that
When thou shalt stand before His throne,
  Or sit as Mary sat.

FEBRUARY 16.

"Thou forgivest the iniquity of my sin."—Ps. xxxii. 5.

If we turn unto God by repentance, He doubtless will turn unto us in mercy. "He will refresh us; and we shall find eternal rest for our wearied souls." Be our sins as red as scarlet, He will make them as white as snow. Though they now press sore upon us, yet He will remove them as far from us as the east is from the west: yea, He will drown them in the very bottom of the sea: He will wholly blot them out of His book, forgive them, and forget them for ever. This our gracious God hath promised; this our true God, who cannot deceive, will perform. If with penitent and humbled hearts we cast ourselves down before God, our God will lift us up. The more we humble ourselves, the more He will exalt us; not for our deserts, but for His promise' sake, of free mercy, and His Son's complete merits. To conclude, if here we be humbled with Christ, hereafter we shall be exalted with Christ, even into the high heavens; and there be placed in the joyful presence of God our Father: to whom, with His Son Christ Jesus our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost our Sanctifier and Comforter, be all honour and praise now and ever. Amen.—*Archbishop Sandys.*

There is joy in heaven!
There is joy in heaven!
When the sheep that went astray
Turns again to virtue's way;
When the soul, by grace subdued,
Sobs its prayer of gratitude!
Then is there joy in heaven!

FEBRUARY 17.

"My spirit hath rejoiced."—LUKE i. 47.

THIS is common language in Scripture. Isaiah, when he would express the intenseness of his longing after God, speaks of his "soul" as desiring Him, and of his "spirit" as seeking Him. David often tells us that his "soul" thirsts for and longs for Him. So Mary speaks here of her soul and her spirit, in order to express, if she can, the strength and depth of that happiness she feels within her. It was no superficial, transient pleasure, excited by Elizabeth's words or kindness; it was a joy lodged deeply within her, filling her heart and soul; quickened and called into outward expression indeed by the sympathy she had experienced, but existing in perfect independence of that sympathy, and of all outward things. It is evident that, young as she was, she had a mind and feelings of unusual strength. Her joy partook therefore of the character of her mind and feelings. It was a powerful joy. And there must be a depth in our mental and spiritual character, before there can be much depth in our inward enjoyments. Light minds will have light joys. A child must not wonder that it can take little or no share in the pleasures of a man. It must wait for a man's strength, and then it shall have a man's enjoyments.—*C. Bradley.*

To take a glimpse within the veil,
  To know that God is mine,
Are springs of joy that never fail,
  Unspeakable! divine!

FEBRUARY 18.

"To guide our feet into the way of peace."—LUKE i. 79.

RIGHTEOUS and true are the ways of the Lord! Peaceful and pleasant are all His paths! "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies." The wandering sheep need "mercy" to restore them; the restored wanderers need "truth" to preserve them; mercy without truth would be an *ignis-fatuus* to deceive. Truth without mercy would be a burning fire to destroy. In the paths of the Lord "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Mercy pities, pardons, and relieves; truth arrests, elevates, and sustains the soul. By mercy we are drawn to the Lord at first, and by His truth we cling to Him for ever. "Righteous and true are the ways of the Lord! Peaceful and pleasant are all His paths! They are ways of life and paths of life to all the members of his flock. He brings the blind by a way that they know not: and leads them in paths that they have not known." "The path of the just is as the shining light." Along his brightening path, the believer walks with God. The blessed Saviour is his way, his truth, his life—a way without weariness—a true way without deception—a living way where there is no death.—*John Stevenson.*

Thy Spirit, O my Father, give,
To be my guide and friend,
To light my path to endless joys,
To Sabbaths without end.

FEBRUARY 19.

"Hereby is My Father glorified."—JOHN xv. 8.

IF we will truly do our actions to the glory of God, let us, in the first place, endeavour to possess our minds most firmly with a sense of the Holiness, and Kindness, and Benignity of the Divine Nature; and acquaint ourselves wholly with the purity, and simplicity, and goodness of Christ's religion; and let us so far consider these things, as to be heartily persuaded we can never do any honour or glory to God, but by living up, as exactly as we can, to all His laws, and doing all the credit and reputation to His gospel, that in our station we are capable of. And therefore let us propose it to ourselves as the great design of our lives, to serve God, and to do good; to be as exemplary in our lives, and as useful in our generations, as we can. But, above all things, let us be infinitely careful that we never pretend religion to serve a secular turn, nor ever do an ill action for the promoting the best designs in the world. And let us add to this our constant prayers to God for His grace and spirit; and then, whatever infirmities and frailties we may be attended with, we shall live up to the rule given us by St. Paul; that is, "Whatsoever we do, we shall do all to the glory of God."

Archbishop Sharp.

A charge to keep I have,
  A God to glorify;
A never-dying soul to save,
  And fit it for the sky:
To serve the present age,
  My calling to fulfil—
O may it all my powers engage
  To do my Master's will!

FEBRUARY 20.

"Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?"—GAL. iii. 1.

AND what is it that we ask of men when we entreat them to escape from the magician, and live for eternity? Is it that they should be less intellectual, less philosophical? On the contrary, religion is the nurse of intellect, and philosophy is most noble when doing homage to revelation. It is not intellectual to live only for this world, it is not philosophical to remain ignorant of God. Is it that they should surrender their pleasures, and walk a round of unvaried mortification? We ask them to surrender nothing which a rational being can approve, or an immortal vindicate. We leave them every pleasure which can be enjoyed without a blush, and remembered without remorse. We ask only that they would flee those vices whose end is death, cultivate those virtues which add as much to the happiness as the ornament of man, and propose to themselves an object commensurate with their capacities. This, let them be assured, is practical Christianity—to show what, even as men, they should avoid, and pursue what, even as men, they should desire. Shall we not then beseech the Almighty, that we may have strength to break the spell, and dissolve the illusion? If we cry for deliverance, the grace within shall be "as tow when it toucheth the fire."—*Canon Melvill.*

With its witching pleasures would this vain world charm,
Or its sordid treasures spread to work me harm:
Bring to my remembrance sad Gethsemane,
Or, in darker semblance, Cross-crown'd Calvary!

FEBRUARY 21.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."—LUKE iv. 4.

THE great guide of life is meditation on the inspired Scriptures. For in them are to be found directions for the conduct; and the lives of blessed men, there recorded and transmitted, are placed before us as living pictures of godly conversation and holy actions for our imitation. Whatsoever defects a man may find in himself, let him ponder on that book till he draws out of it, as from a kind of medical repository, a remedy suitable to his disease. Thus he who is in quest of temperance sets continually before him the history of Joseph. . . . Again, he learns fortitude from Job; he will find in David the man of prowess in arms, but gentle, placid, and unresentful towards his private enemies. Such a man, too, was Moses, rising up with indignation when men sinned against the Lord, but sustaining in a spirit of meekness his own ill usage. . . . Prayer, again, succeeding to the reading of the Scriptures, makes the soul fresher, stirring it up to a holy longing after God. That is the right sort of prayer which brings the notion of God vividly to the soul. In this way we become the temples of God.—*St. Basil.*

A glory gilds the sacred page,
  Majestic like the sun;
It gives a light to every age,
  It gives, but borrows none.
My soul rejoices to pursue
  The steps of Him I love,
Till glory breaks upon my view
  In brighter worlds above.

FEBRUARY 22.

"Walk in the Spirit."—GAL. v. 16.

DISTINCTLY to the eye of God, though man's dull eye cannot yet trace the line, there glows through the human race the fire of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, severing the holy from the unholy, the children of God from the children of wrath, the saved from the damned. Not impassable, thank God! is that gulf yet while life remains; for it is bridged by the merits of Christ, and may be crossed by every true penitent on the wings of faith: but there the demarcation lies, on one side or other of which each one of us must at this moment be; on the one part the light of acceptance and growing holiness, the smile of God's countenance, the bright hope of glory; on the other the darkness of sin—of sin's dominion and of sin's doom—a "darkness which may be felt." It is, then, the most solemn question which the soul of man can put to itself, and one which it is madness to delay to ask, or to shrink from answering, Have I the Spirit of Christ?

Bishop Jackson.

How blest the union, how divine,
  That saints with Jesus share;
In sacred fellowship combined,
  And guarded by His care!
As branches growing from the tree,
  Thence nourishment derive;
By sweet communion, Lord, with Thee,
  Thy faithful followers live.

FEBRUARY 23.

"His heart is established, he shall not be afraid."—Ps. cxii. 8.

THERE is an old apophthegm which says, *Reverence thyself*, and in this saying much sound wisdom is locked up. If we had half the reverence for ourselves that we have for the world, how upright, and how pure, would our conduct be! we should carry about with us an inward judge, whose vigilance we should fear, whose justice we should respect, and whose praise we should love; an awful judge, the man within the breast, whose tribunal would extend over the motives of actions, who would approve virtue, while it yet only glowed in the thoughts, and discover crime in the secret workings of the soul. This principle of self-love would effectually banish from our minds every vicious indulgence of thought, and every low, ignominious feeling; we should no longer wear virtue as a mask, but all that we do now from conformity, we should do then from principle and love to God.—But the heart is established by prayer, because it recalls to us the perfection of God, and makes us suspicious of ourselves;—it brings before us the crucified Saviour of mankind—it turns our thoughts from men to angels, from frailty to perfection, from a few evil days to a happy eternity, from a mixture of sighs and joys to a gladness that endureth for ever.—*Sydney Smith.*

True knowledge leads to love,
True dignity abides with him alone
Who in the silent hour of inward thought
Can still suspect, and still revere himself
In lowliness of heart.

FEBRUARY 24.

St. Matthias.

"The whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."—PROV. xvi. 33.

MATTHIAS, the saint of this day, was, on the fall of Judas from the Apostleship, put upon the election with Joseph, called Barsabas, to succeed in his place, and the choice was to be determined by lot; but before they entered upon it, they prayed unto God to direct the choice, saying, "Thou, O Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two Thou hast chosen." . . . So they poured out their prayers before they gave forth their lots, and then by God Almighty's direction, "the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles." . . . From the Apostles praying to God to direct their choice to the fittest person to succeed in that holy office, we may learn, that all who seek for holy orders should seriously examine themselves, whether they are moved herein by the Holy Ghost, and of their own fitness to enter into so high and holy a calling. And likewise that the governors of the Church should beg God Almighty's guidance and direction in so great an affair, that they may wisely make choice of fit labourers to work in God's vineyard.

Matthew Hole.

Who is God's chosen priest?
  He who on Christ stands waiting day and night;
Who traced His holy steps, nor ever ceased,
  From Jordan's banks to Bethphage height;
Who hath learned lowliness
  From his Lord's cradle, patience from His cross;
Whom poor men's eyes and hearts consent to bless;
  To whom, for Christ, the world is loss!

FEBRUARY 25.

"All are Thy servants."—Ps. cxix. 91.

In this widely extended universe, "all are His servants." "The stars in their courses"—fire and hail, snow and vapours, stormy winds—fulfil His word. "He sendeth forth His commandment upon earth: His word runneth very swiftly." Man—"created in His image"—destined for His glory—is the only rebel in the earth. Most affecting is the appeal that God is constrained to make concerning him; "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me!" Let this contemplation teach us the end for which we are created —"to be His servants." Let it show us the reason "that we are not consumed"—"I am the Lord, I change not." Let it warn sinners, how vain are their secret hopes that God's word will fail of accomplishment—"For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven." The decrees of the kings of the earth are exposed to all the variation of a changing world. They may be revoked. But "the word settled in heaven" remaineth as the throne of God—unshaken and eternal; exhibiting the foundation of the believer's hope and the unbeliever's terror to be alike unalterably fixed.—*C. Bridges.*

Woe worth these barren hearts of ours,
Where Thou hast set celestial flowers,
And watered with more balmy showers
Than e'er distilled
In Eden on th' ambrosial bowers,
Yet nought we yield.

FEBRUARY 26.

"The love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."—EPH. iii. 19.

WHAT unspeakable pleasure is there in living and conversing with a friend who hath done us some great favour! How is this heightened if he suffered in doing it! How does our love increase, if he risked his life to save ours! What then must the presence, the smiles, the enjoyment of Him be, who suffered in our nature to save us from eternal death; who hath taken such infinite care to sustain us in all our trials; who, in short, has forgiven us such a world of sin; who has crowned us at the last with mercy and loving-kindness, and admitted us into His gracious presence, "where there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore!" If "the earth is full of His goodness," if "He withholdeth no good thing from them that love Him," if "He satisfieth the desire of every living thing" even here, where sin is mixed with our best services, how shall we conceive His goodness whereof we are to taste in Heaven, where sin shall have ceased to interpose between His influence and our souls? Then shall we cry out, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"—*Skelton.*

Whereso'er our footsteps wander,
  Grace and nature teach His love;
Guide us here, and lift us yonder,
  Where He dwells in light above.

FEBRUARY 27.

"Walk not as other Gentiles walk."—EPH. iv. 17.

FEW people are so hardened as to say, "I am resolved to have no religion;" but there are an infinite number of Christians who are content to live like heathens, and yet hope that all will be well with them at the last. What shall one say to make them sensible of their stupidity? Shall we ask them, whether they believe an eternity to come of endless joys, or endless misery? Yes, they will say, they do. What! and yet live as if you neither feared nor believed them? "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," is one of the very first precepts of that Gospel you have embraced. And is it no uneasiness to your mind to know that it is the least thing in your thoughts, the very last in your intention? And will you hope to shelter yourself from the wrath of God by an outward profession of Christianity? Why, be well assured that there is no man so far from salvation as one who is got into the way of doing what good Christians do, without being inwardly converted; who have (as the Apostle speaks) "a form of godliness, but denying the power," not suffering Christianity to make them one jot better men.—*Bishop Wilson.*

Show me what I have to do;
Every hour my strength renew;
Let me live a life of faith,
Let me die Thy people's death.

FEBRUARY 28.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly."—EPH. v. 15.

THE ancient heathen might say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" let us enjoy without reserve, and without measure, all the pleasures which the world affords, for to-morrow we may leave it, and we know of no other. But how absurd would it be for *the Christian* to say this! how mad would it be for him to act accordingly, when he knows, that though to-morrow his soul may be separated from his body, yet that they will be again united, and live for ever in a future state of existence! What an amazing difference does this fact make in our circumstances, and how inexcusable shall we be, if it does not produce a suitable difference in our conduct! Even the *possibility* of such an event must have a powerful influence over our minds and manners; what then must be the case when it amounts, as it does with every sincere believer in the Gospel, to *absolute certainty?* With what cheerfulness shall we acquiesce under misfortunes when we reflect, that "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Bishop Porteus.

The ocean I am nearing is beautiful and fair,
He leads me through the meadow, He'll make me happy there;
And anywhere and everywhere, so that I do His will,
And do my life's work bravely, I shall be happy still.

FEBRUARY 29.

"The Lord your God proveth you."—DEUT. xiii. 3.

FEAR of God and faith ought to make you of ready mind unto all things. Though loss of wealth be your lot, though your limbs be harassed by the painful ravages of disease, though the removal of wife, of children, and of friends bring its gloomy and painful separation, be these things not offences to you, but combats; let them not impair or break the faith of the Christian, but rather manifest his valour in the struggle; since all injury of present evils is to be despised in the confidence of the good things that are to be. Unless the fight have first come, there cannot be the victory; when victory has in the strife of battle been attained, there is given to the conquerors their crown. The pilot is discerned in the tempest, the soldier is approved in the field. It is a trial without endurance where danger is not; the combating of adversity gives approval of what is real. What greatness is it of spirit to battle in strength of soul unshaken against the assaults of desolation and death! How glorious to stand unbending among ruins of the human race, instead of lying prostrate with those who are void of a hope in God!—*St. Cyprian.*

No knights of old, in fête or fight,
Have ever won a name so bright
  As thou may'st win and wear,
If, like the valiant ones of old,
Thy faith be high, thy heart be bold
  To do as well as dare.

MARCH 1.

"I intreated Thy favour with my whole heart."—Ps. cxix. 58.

It is a rare, infrequent thing, this communing of the heart with God, speaking its thoughts to Him concerning itself, and concerning Him and His dealings with it, which is the speech here recommended, and is that divine exercise of meditation with itself, and with God, hearkening to what the Lord God speaks to us, and our hearts echoing and resounding His words, and opening to Him our thoughts of them and of ourselves. Though they stand open, and He sees them all, even when we tell Him not of them, yet because He loves us, He loves to hear them of our own speaking; as a father delights in the little stammering, lisping language of his beloved child. Our thoughts and speeches in most things run to waste, yea, are defiled; as water spilt on the ground is both lost, and it is polluted, mingled with dust. But no word spoken to God from the serious sense of a holy heart, is lost; He receives it, and returns it into our bosom with advantage. And this communication certainly is the sweetest and happiest choice, to speak little with men, and much with God. One short word spoken to God, eases the heart more when it is afflicted than the largest complainings to the greatest and most powerful, or the kindest and most friendly of men.—*Archbishop Leighton.*

Sweet to hold converse with Thee, Lord,
And hear Thee answer by Thy word;
Thy love in all my life to trace,
And live that life—the child of grace.

MARCH 2.

"To die is gain."—PHIL. i. 21.

THROUGH the knowledge of Jesus Christ did all the holy Fathers and servants of God, in the Old and New Testaments, give themselves over, willingly, unto death—the way of all flesh. Holy Simeon saith: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word." Holy Stephen was content to suffer the fierce cruelty of enemies; for in his last trouble he knelt down and cried with a loud voice: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Paul, the chosen vessel of God, speaketh thus: "Having a desire to depart and be with Christ." . . . . Thou hast daily made thy prayer as Christ hath taught thee, that God will take thee into His kingdom, and that His will be done. Now if He will graciously convey thee into His kingdom, thou oughtest to rejoice, and, as His own child, willingly obey him. . . . Grant, O Lord, "that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for His merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.—*Bishop Coverdale.*

Lo, He beckons from on high,
Fearless to His presence fly:
Thine the merit of his blood,
Thine the righteousness of God;
Angels, joyful to attend,
Hovering round thy pillow, bend,
Wait to catch the signal given,
And escort thee quick to Heaven.

MARCH 3.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."—PHIL. ii. 5.

WHAT can be more disagreeing than a crucified Christ and a carnal Christian? what more contrary than a Saviour despising the world, and one that professeth friendship to him loving it above God? A Saviour that suffered all things, and a world that will not suffer the mortifying of unreasonable sins? A meek and patient Saviour, and a revengeful generation, that pretend to be His followers? Jesus that hath conquered death, and a Christian that cannot conquer himself? a Head that is in heaven, and a member of His, that only looks at things on earth? Look on Him seriously, and study to be like Him. Never take off thine eyes from His beauties, till all His lovely qualities be imprinted on thy heart. Learn of Him to be meek and lowly of heart. Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given Himself for us. Oh, what a goodly sight would it be, to behold our Lord still walking up and down in the world? to see the loving, the peaceable, the meek, the merciful, the holy Jesus again upon the earth! Do thou resolve to be that blessed man in whom He shall appear. Let not His image and likeness be lost, whilst thou art in being; and labour to leave it upon others when thou art dead and gone.—*Bishop Patrick.*

Lord, as to Thy dear Cross we flee,
And plead to be forgiven,
So let Thy life our pattern be,
And form our souls for heaven.

MARCH 4.

"Not having mine own righteousness."—PHIL. iii. 9.

WOE be to that person, who hath no other righteousness but his own wherein to appear before the Judge of the whole world! for howsoever specious they may seem to men, they will be adjudged sinners before the Eternal God. He therefore that would come to Christ, although he must labour after righteousness to the utmost of his power, yet, when he has done all, he must renounce it, and look upon himself as an unprofitable servant. "For Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Matt. ix. 13.) Such persons, therefore, Christ came to call, and if they come to Him, they cannot but find rest and righteousness in Him; and if any of us desire to go after Christ, so as to be His disciples, we must be sure to look upon ourselves as sinners, and, when we have laid aside all thoughts of our own righteousness as to the matter of justification before God, then, and not till then, shall we be rightly qualified to embrace another's, even that righteousness which is by faith in Christ.—*Bishop Beveridge*

Forbid it, Lord! that I should boast
  Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
  I sacrifice them to His blood.

MARCH 5.

"Prayer and supplication with thanksgiving."—PHIL. iv. 6.

PRAYER is a lifting up of the mind unto God, or a friendly talking with the Lord. In the Word God speaketh unto us, in prayer we speak unto Him. Prayer is the pouring out of a contrite heart, with a sure persuasion that God will grant our requests, and give ear to the suits which we make unto Him. . . . Thanksgivings are when we praise and thank God for the great mercies, graces, and gifts, which we have received at His hands. For we must acknowledge that "every good and perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of lights," and is by His mercy freely given. Prayer generally may be divided into two parts, petition and thanksgiving: in the one we ask of God, in the other we offer unto God: both are accepted as sweet-smelling sacrifices; pure, and through the merit of His Son, pleasant in His sight. The next thing to be considered in prayer is, when, where, and how to pray. When? Always, "without ceasing." Where? In all places, especially in the house of prayer. How? From the heart, "lifting up pure and clean hands;" that is to say, in faith and love. Our prayer feathered with these two wings, flieth straight into Heaven.—*Archbishop Sandys.*

I look towards that holy place,
Where sinners find a throne of grace,
  And there I fix mine eyes.
My vows unto the Lord I'll pay,
And there, upon His altar, lay
  My willing sacrifice.

MARCH 6.

"Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."—
EPH. iv. 1.

LET this then be thy first care, strictly to watch and guard thyself from sin and temptation; but know withal, that thy own strength is not sufficient for this great work; and therefore do not forget most humbly and earnestly to implore the Divine mercy and protection; let thy Saviour Jesus Christ be ever in thy thoughts and affections, and wear Him as a signet upon thy heart; for when the door is sealed and kept by Him, all thy faculties will be under His governance; no thought can go in or out, or lodge there, but by His permission: the family of heaven and earth will bear thee company; thousands of angels will pitch their tents about thee, and guard the passes of thy outward senses, that no unclean thing enter there. And the great adversary of souls, how mighty and formidable soever in himself, will not be able to break through these bright armies, nor dare to make his attacks which he foresees will prove unsuccessful. So great an awe will the dread of this Divine keeper strike; so sure a defence will these heavenly succours be, against that otherwise invincible enemy.

St. Bernard.

In little things of common life,
There lies the Christian's noblest strife—
When he does conscience make
Of every thought and throb within,
And words and looks of self and sin
Crushes for Jesus' sake.

MARCH 7.

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God."—
DEUT. xxix. 29.

CURIOUS questions and vain speculations are like a plume of feathers, which some will give anything for, and some will give nothing for. Paul rebuked them which troubled their heads about genealogies; how would he reprove men and women of our days, if he saw how they busy their heads about vain questions, climbing upon the pinnacles where they may fall, while they might walk upon the pavement without danger? Some have a great deal more desire to learn where hell is, than to know how they may escape it; to hear what God did purpose before the world began, rather than to learn what He will do when the world is ended; to understand whether they shall know one another in Heaven, than to know whether they belong to Heaven. This rock hath made many shipwrecks, that men search mysteries before they know principles: like the Bethshemites, which were not content to see the ark, but they must pry into it and finger it. . . . It is good to leave off learning, where God hath left off teaching; for they which have an ear where God hath no tongue, hearken not unto God, but to the tempter, as Eve did to the serpent.—*Henry Smith.*

Mysteries are food for angels; they digest
With ease, and find them nutriment; but man,
While yet he dwells below, must stoop to glean
His manna from the ground, or starve and die.

MARCH 8.

"Charity, which is the bond of perfectness."—COL. iii. 14.

CHARITY is a virtue which never goes alone, but it is that which seasons, and gives life and efficacy to all the rest; without which, if it were possible for me to enjoy all the graces that the bountiful hand of God ever showered upon a reasonable creature, yet, if St. Paul speaks the truth, I should be nothing worth; it is that which fulfils all the commandments. This is evident to all that shall but slightly, and in haste, read over 1 Cor. xiii., where we may behold almost all the virtues that can be named enwrapt in one virtue of charity, and love, according to the several acts thereof, changed and transformed into so many several graces: it "suffereth long," and so it is forbearance; it "is kind," and so it is courtesy; it "vaunteth not itself," and so it is modesty; it "is not puffed up," and so it is humility; it "is not easily provoked," and so it is lenity; it "thinketh no evil," and so it is simplicity; it "rejoiceth in the truth," and so it is verity; it "beareth all things," and so it is fortitude; it "believeth all things," and so it is faith; it "hopeth all things," and so it is confidence; it "endureth all things," and so it is patience; it "never faileth," and so it is perseverance.—*William Chillingworth.*

He is in God, and God in him,
  Who still abides in love;
'Tis love that makes the Cherubim
  Obey and praise above.
For God is love: the loveless heart
Hath in His life and joy no part.

MARCH 9.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same."—COL. iv. 2.

THE Apostle adds watchfulness to perseverance in prayer: *watch thereunto;* as a sentinel suspecting the approach of an enemy; as a watchman guarding the city during the darkness of the night; as a physician attending to all the symptoms of a disease; as the keeper of a prison watching an insidious and treacherous criminal. Our heart needs all this care; spiritual enemies are near; the darkness of the soul exposes it to danger; the disease of sin requires a watchful treatment, and the unparalleled deceitfulness of the affections can never safely be trusted for a moment. No: we must watch before prayer in order to dismiss the world from our thoughts, to gather up our minds in God, and to implore the Holy Spirit's help. We must watch during prayer to guard against distraction, against the incursions of evil thoughts, and decay of fervour in our supplications. We must watch after prayer, in order that we may act consistently with what we have been imploring of Almighty God; wait His time for answering us, and not lose the visitations of grace; "for with God are the moments of life, of mercy, of enlargement, and of gracious consolation." *

Bishop Daniel Wilson.

Jesus, my strength, my hope,
  On Thee I cast my care:
With humble confidence look up,
  And know Thou hearest prayer.
Give me on Thee to wait
  Till I can all things do—
On Thee, Almighty to create,
  Almighty to renew!

* Quesnel.

MARCH 10.

"I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist."—LUKE xxi. 15.

THE blessed Jesus came down to teach mankind a spiritual religion, offered to their acceptance on the sole force of its own evidence. The propagators of this religion had no need to be endowed with worldly authority or learning; for here was no body of men to be conducted, no civil government to be erected or administered. Had Jesus, on the contrary, made choice of the great and learned, it might be then objected that the Gospel had made its way by the aid of human power or sophistry. To preserve, therefore, its evidence unsullied, the meanest and most illiterate of a barbarous people were made choice of for the instruments of God's last great revelation to mankind, armed with no other power but of miracles, and with no other wisdom but of truth. St. Paul, who had fathomed the mysterious depths of Divine wisdom, was so penetrated with the view of this last dispensation, that he breaks out into this triumphant exclamation: "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"—*Bishop Warburton.*

O God, with love's sweet might,
  Who dost anoint and arm
Thy soldiers for the fight
  With grace that shields from harm;
    Thrice blessed Three,
      Heaven's endless days
      Shall sing Thy praise
    Eternally. Amen.

MARCH 11.

"What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee."—Ps. lvi. 3.

WE lose time in remorse. . . . . In the wilderness, had the children of Israel, instead of gazing on the serpent, looked down on their own wounds to see how deep they were, cure would have been impossible; their only charm was to look off their wounds. Just so when giving up this hopeless work of self-inspection, and turning from ourselves, our gaze on Christ, then, first, the charm of consolation dawns. Besides, in God's world, for those that are in earnest, there is no real failure, at last. No work truly done, no word earnestly spoken, no sacrifice freely made, was ever in vain. If ever failure seemed to rest on a noble life, it was when the Son of Man, deserted by His friends, heard the shout which proclaimed that the Pharisees had successfully drawn the net round their Divine victim. Yet from that very hour of defeat and death there went forth the world's life; from that moment of apparent failure there proceeded forth into the ages to come the spirit of the conquering Cross. Surely, if the Cross says anything, it says that apparent defeat is real victory, and that there is a heaven for those who have *nobly* and *truly* failed on earth.—*F. W. Robertson.*

Who shall hush the weary spirit's chiding?
  Who the aching void within shall fill?
Who shall whisper of a peace abiding,
  And each surging billow calmly still?

Only He whose wounded heart was broken
  With the bitter cross and thorny crown;
Whose dear love glad words of joy had spoken,
  Who His life for us laid meekly down.

MARCH 12.

"Hope thou in God."—Ps. lxiii. 5.

DOES God hide away His face from thee? Wait upon Him with faith and patience, and thou shalt see all these storms will blow over. These chastisements, with which thou art exercised, when they have brought forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness, will turn to thy exceeding joy and comfort. And thou shalt then, more affectionately than ever, give thanks to Him, "who is the help of thy countenance, and thy God." O that all of us were influenced by such a spirit as this of David! O that we would endeavour, in all conditions and circumstances of life, thus firmly to hope in God, and put our confidence in His mercy; not disquieting ourselves with present events, nor being solicitous about the future, but casting the whole burden of both upon the Lord, who careth for us, looking up to Him in every dispensation of providence, and assuredly believing that all shall at the last be for best to us! So should we find Him to be our Saviour and mighty deliverer in all dangers, and should for ever have cause to "give Him thanks who is the help of our countenance and our God."

Archbishop Sharp.

Where the mourner weeping
  Sheds the secret tear,
God His watch is keeping,
  Though none else is near.
God will never leave thee,
  All thy wants He knows,
Feels the pains that grieve thee,
  Sees thy cares and woes.

MARCH 13.

"Sorrow not."—1 Thess. iv. 13.

One after another is withdrawn from the Church below, and heaven is gathering into its capacious bosom the company of the justified. We feel our loss when those whose experience qualified them to teach, and whose life was a sermon to us, are removed to the courts of the Church above. But we "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope," as we mark the breaches which death makes on the right hand and on the left. We may, indeed, think that "the righteous is taken away from the evil to come," and that we ourselves are left to struggle through days of fear and perplexity. Be it so. We are not alone; He who is "the resurrection and the life" leads us on to the battle and the grave. It might accord with our natural feelings that they who have instructed us by example, and cheered by exhortation, should remain to counsel and to animate. We feel that we can but ill spare the matured piety of the veteran Christian, and the glowing devotion of younger disciples. Yet we will say with Asa, when there came against him a host of a hundred thousand and three hundred chariots, "Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help;—help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee."—*Canon Melvill.*

He can, He will, from out the dust
Raise the blest spirits of the just;
Heal every wound, hush every fear;
From every eye wipe every tear;
And place them where distress is o'er,
And pleasures dwell for evermore.

MARCH 14.

"Hold fast that which is good."—1 THESS. v. 21.

THE things of this world are not only a shadow, but are very deceitful; they promise us goods, and give us evils; promise us ease, and give us cares; promise security, and give us danger; promise us great contents, and give us great vexations. There is no felicity upon earth, no happiness which mounts so high, which is not depressed by some low calamity; it is not needful to attend the end of life to see the imposture of it, it is enough to see the alterations whilst it lasts; be assured that vain is all the greatness of the earth, if that of heaven be not gained by it. Since, then, all kingdoms, empires, honours, and greatness whatsoever, are but a shadow, and will presently vanish, and we are here in this world but as in an inn, from whence we are suddenly to depart; let us take care for our journey, and furnish ourselves with provision for eternity; let us clothe ourselves with such garments as we may carry along with us. This our wealth, or that our comfort, whether we will or no, may be taken from us; but eternal happiness, unless by our fault, cannot.—The roses of glory in heaven do not fade, nor doth custom dull the lively taste of those celestial delights. Blessed Lord! at Thy right hand there are riches, greatness, and power, for ever, without end.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

What I possess, or what I crave,
  Brings no content, great God, to me;
If what I would, or what I have,
  Be not possessed and blest in Thee.

MARCH 15.

"Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary."—Ps. lxxvii. 13.

It is no doubt that David continued a strict and most pious communion with God, during his wanderings upon the mountains, and in the wilderness; but still he found in himself, that he had not those meltings upon his heart, those transports of affection, that he used to have in the fixed and solemn place of God's worship. How emphatically and divinely does he proclaim this when he says, "My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary;" . . . and where should we be so confident of a blessing, as in the place and element of blessings; the place where God both promises and delights to dispense larger proportions of His favour, even for this purpose, that He may fix a mark of honour upon His sanctuary; and so recommend and endear it to the sons of men, upon the stock of their own interest, as well as His glory; who has declared Himself "the High and the Lofty One that inhabits eternity, and dwells not in houses made with hands;" yet is pleased to be present in the assemblies of His Saints?—*R. South, D.D.*

Though private prayer be a brave design,
  Yet public hath more promises, more love;
And love's a weight to hearts, to eyes a sign,
  We all are but cold suitors; let us move
Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven:
Pray with the most; for where most pray, is Heav'n.

MARCH 16.

"Men loved darkness rather than light."—JOHN iii. 19.

DOUBTLESS we may hope that if any one does his very utmost to regulate not only his conduct by the dictates of his conscience, but his conscience by the standard of God's will, an allowance will be made for the errors of judgment he may fall into—this weakness of understanding, or this unavoidable ignorance. But there is a great difference between want of knowledge and want of candour, though both may alike lead to error. The allowance which may be made for dulness of intellect, will not be extended to perversity and prejudice. There is a wide distinction between the blindness of those who obstinately shut their eyes, or who turn them away from the truth—of those, in short, who do not choose to see—and the blindness which arises from unavoidable disease or accident; and if men are in blindness as to what is right and wrong, not because the light has not shone, but because they have "loved darkness better than light," they cannot hope to be reckoned among the children of light.—*Archbishop Whately.*

Jesu! guide our way
To eternal day!
So shall we, no more delaying,
Follow Thee, Thy voice obeying;
Lead us by Thy hand
To our Father's land!

MARCH 17.

"True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."—JOHN iv. 23.

A TASTE and relish for religious exercise, or the want of it, is one of the marks and tokens by which we may judge whether our heart be right towards God or not. It cannot be disputed, but that the Author and Giver of all things, upon whose will and whose mercy we depend for everything we have, ought to live in the thoughts and affections of His rational creatures. "Through Thee I have been holden up ever since I was born; Thou art He that took me from my mother's womb: my praise shall be always of Thee." If there be such things as first sentiments towards God, these words of the Psalmist express them. That devotion to God is a duty, stands upon the same proof as that God exists. But devotion is an act of the mind strictly. "God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit;" that is, in mind and thought. The devotion of the mind may be, will be, ought to be, testified and accompanied by outward performances; but, without the mind going along with it, no form, no solemnity, can avail, as a service to God. These two points, then, being true; first, that devotion is a duty; secondly, that the heart must participate in it; it follows that the heart cannot be right toward God, unless it be possessed with a taste and relish for His service.

Archdeacon Paley.

God is a spirit! and they who aright
Would perform the pure worship He loveth,
In the heart's holy temple will seek, with delight,
That spirit the Father approveth.

MARCH 18.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."—1 TIM. i. 15.

O! HOW welcome ought this news to be to us! How transported should we be at the infinite kindness of God manifested to us by our Saviour! O! praised be God for His astonishing Love! For ever adored be our Lord Jesus, that has made a propitiation for us by His blood. O! let us for ever hug the invaluable Scriptures of the New Testament, if there was nothing else in them but that "faithful saying"—that saying "worthy of all men to be received—that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," to save you and me, and all sinners, even the greatest of sinners. And O Thou blessed Saviour, that hast done all this for us, give us such a lively sense of Thy marvellous love in leaving Thy Glory and taking human flesh upon Thee, that we may endeavour in all our actions to conform ourselves to Thy example; and make it the business of our lives to be obedient to thy precepts, to submit to Thy holy will, and to be contented to be disposed of by Thee, in all the circumstances of our lives; that so in faith and obedience, in patience and perseverance we may wait for, and at last obtain, that "crown of righteousness, which Thou hast laid up for all that love Thee."—*Archbishop Sharp.*

Lord! when I lift my voice to Thee,
  To whom all praise belongs,
Thy justice and Thy love shall be
  The subject of my songs.
Let wisdom o'er my path preside
  To lead my steps aright,
And make Thy perfect law my guide,
  Thy service my delight.

MARCH 19.

"The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."—JOHN vi. 63.

THE Holy Scriptures are full of majesty, heavenly wisdom, and authority, such as are meet to proceed from the glory of God; yea, oftentimes under great simplicity of words, and plainness and easiness of style; which nevertheless more affects the hearts of the hearers, than all the painted eloquence and lofty style of rhetoricians and orators, and argues the Holy Ghost to be author of them. . . . The end and scope of the Scriptures, is for the advancement of God's glory, and the salvation of man's soul: for they treat either of the noble acts of God and of Christ, or the salvation of mankind. The deadly hatred that the devil and all wicked men carry against them, prove them to be of God. For if they were of flesh and blood, then flesh and blood would love them, read them, practise them, and every way regard them more than it doth. For the world loveth his own, as our Saviour Christ saith; but we, being but carnal, earthly, savour not the things that be of God, and until the Lord open our hearts, and we be born again of God's Spirit, we have no desire unto them.

Archbishop Ussher.

Safe in my heart and closely hid,
Thy word, my treasure, lies,
To succour me with timely aid
When sinful thoughts arise.

MARCH 20.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine."—JOHN vii. 17.

THE knowledge of great and profound truths of religion, is a knowledge that men are not so much to study, as to live themselves into; a knowledge that passes through the heart into the head. . . . Let us, daily and incessantly, pray to God for His Grace; and, if God gives grace, we may be sure that knowledge will not stay long behind, since it is the same principle that purifies the heart, and clarifies the understanding. Let all our inquiries into the deep points of theology be begun, and carried on, with fervent petitions to God, that He would dispose our minds to direct all our knowledge to the promotion of a good life, both in ourselves and others. The truths of Christ crucified are the Christian's philosophy: and a good life is the Christian's logic; that great, instrumental, introductive art which must guide the mind into the former. And, where a long course of piety, and close communion with God, has purged the heart, and rectified the will, and made all things ready for the reception of God's Spirit, knowledge will break in upon such a soul, like the sun shining in his full might, with such a victorious light, that nothing shall be able to resist it."—*Robert South, D.D.*

Let everlasting thanks be Thine,
  For such a bright display
As makes a world of darkness shine
  With beams of heavenly day.

MARCH 21.

"The Lord's voice crieth unto the city.—MICAH vi. 9.

THERE is a voice in all dispensations of Providence; a call, a cry, in every rod of God, in every chastising Providence. He therein makes a declaration of His name, holiness, and power, and this every wise man will endeavour to discern, and so comply with the call. "*The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see Thy name; hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.*" Hearken not to any who would give any other interpretation of present providential dispensations in the world, but that they are plain declarations of His displeasure against the sins of men. . . . Where calamities, *public* or *private*, take place, this is the time wherein we may have our especial trial whether we be spiritually-minded or not. If grace be resident within us, it will exert itself in a diligent search into, and a holy watch over, ourselves respecting those things against which the displeasure of God is declared. It is certainly our duty to search diligently that nothing could be found in us against which God's anger is manifested. No ground of hope respecting our spiritual condition, should divert us from diligence in self-examination.—*John Owen.*

Before the terrors of His face
Let mortal man his pride abase,
  And every idol fall:
Prostrate be every haughty foe,
The pomp and power of earth lie low,
  And God be all in all!

MARCH 22.

"The living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy."—1 TIM. vi. 17.

"THE living God" must have the greatest power to reward our trust, and He, "who giveth us all richly to enjoy," has shown Himself to have the greatest will also. All that we are, and have, and can hope for, proceeds from Him, and depends upon Him. Since therefore He has made us capable of knowing this, duty, gratitude, and interest conspire to demand that we devote our whole being to Him; use what He has bestowed on us agreeably to the rules which He has prescribed, and for the attainment of the ends which He has in view; nor ever be so absurdly absorbed in His gifts, as to forget the Giver; whose bounty, the more largely we taste of it, ought surely to inspire the warmer love. And therefore the rich and great, on whom Providence has conferred so many distinguished benefits and privileges, are bound beyond others to a most affectionate piety in return; and yet, is it not on the whole visibly true, and these of all others express the least piety in the whole compass of their behaviour? . . . "Charge them who are rich in this world, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life."—1 Tim. vi.

Archbishop Secker.

Man is God's image; but a poor man is
Christ's stamp to boot: both images regard.
God reckons for him, count the favour His:
Write, so much giv'n to God; thou shalt be heard.
Let thy alms go before, and keep heaven's gate
Open for thee; or both may come too late.

MARCH 23.

"The Scripture cannot be broken."—JOHN x. 35.

IF the Scriptures were written for our instruction, if they were intended for a light and for a lamp shining in a dark place, I would ask, What method of interpretation is likely to conduce to this particular end? I conceive that there can be but one reply given, and that is the plain and literal interpretation of the Word. Here I may be allowed to quote a few words from Hooker. He says: "I hold it for a most infallible rule, in exposition of Sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changes the meaning of words, as Alchemy does, or would do, the substance of metals; makes of everything what it lists, and in the end brings all truth to nothing." . . . Let us recollect, that if holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, it was as they were moved by God the Holy Ghost; and therefore, that the Omniscience of God is concerned in it, the knowledge of Him who sees all things from the beginning; that the Omnipotence of God is concerned, who ruleth all things according to the counsel of His own will.—*Bishop Villiers.*

To this, this only, will I cleave,
  Thy Word is all my plea;
Thy Word is truth, and I believe;
  Have mercy, Lord, on me!

MARCH 24.

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men."—Ps. cxviii. 8.

GOD very often afflicts good men for this reason, that they may the more trust in Him; that they may see the vanity of all earthly things, and exercise a more lively faith and dependence upon His Providence; which being so, it cannot be doubted, but that this is a certain means to get their afflictions removed; for, take away the cause, and the effect ceases. If their not trusting in God was the cause of their affliction, then their hearty affiance in Him will be the means to set them free from it. It is true, indeed, the deliverances that God works for His children, are not always such as they desire or pray for; He is often not pleased to remove His hand in that instance they wish He would. But still, He doth deliver them. If He does not answer their prayers in kind, yet, if He gives them grace and strength to undergo what He lays upon them, is not this as great mercy to them? O therefore, whatever the event be, whatever flesh and blood suggest to us, let us fix this principle in our hearts, that to trust in God, and depend on Him, in a constant adherence to our duty, is the most effectual course we can take, both to support us under affliction, and to deliver us from it.—*Archbishop Sharp.*

Man's wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone;
And even an angel would be weak,
Who trusted in his own.

MARCH 25.

Annunciation.

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord."—LUKE i. 38.

WHAT holiness and loveliness of character appear in the little which Scripture tells us of the Blessed Virgin! What quiet thoughtfulness, purity, faith, and submission to God's will! This character belongs always to such as "most excel in virtue." Hastiness to act and speak is not the habit of faith. "He that believeth shall not make haste." Faith produces patience, calmness, and thoughtfulness among its fruits; and where the habits of quiet thought are deepest in the mind, the character is ever most gentle, pure, and devout. The Virgin "believed" the angel's word: her question, "How shall this be?" did not express doubt as to the fact announced to her, but was merely an inquiry as to the manner in which it should be accomplished: whereas the question of Zacharias, "Whereby shall I know this?" though seemingly so little different from that of Mary, proceeded from some lurking doubt in the fact itself, which, naturally, was so impossible. The Virgin submitted meekly to God's will: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word."—*Bishop Trower.*

Ave Maria! thou whose name
All but adoring love may claim,
  Yet may we reach thy shrine;
For He, thy Son, and Saviour, vows
To crown all lowly lofty brows
  With love and joy like thine.

MARCH 26.

"My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee."—Ps. cxix. 120.

BELIEVERS in Christ! rejoice in your deliverance from that "fear which hath torment." Yet cherish that holy reverential fear of the character and judgments of God, which will form your most effectual safeguard "from presumptuous sins." The very supposition, that if God had not engaged Himself to you by an unchangeable covenant, His eternal judgments would have been your eternal portion, is of itself sufficient to mingle the wholesome ingredient of fear into the most established assurance. Can you look down into the burning gulf beneath your feet, without the recollection—If I were not immovably fastened to "the Rock of Ages," by the strong chain of everlasting love, here must have been my abode through the countless agencies of eternity: if I had not been upheld by the grace, as well as by the providence of God, I might have dropped out of His hand, as one and another not more rebellious than I have fallen into this intolerable perdition! O God! "my flesh trembleth for fear of Thee, and I am afraid of Thy judgments."—*Charles Bridges.*

Though sin would fill me with distress,
The throne of grace I dare address,
For Jesus is my righteousness.
Though faint my prayers and cold my love,
My steadfast hope shall not remove,
While Jesus intercedes above.
Against me earth and hell combine,
But by my side is power divine;
Jesus is all, and He is mine.

MARCH 27.

"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."—TITUS i. 2.

THIS divine promise is the ground on which the Christian rests all his hope of life and immortality. The light of nature and the dictates of reason tell him indeed that there *may* be a world beyond the grave, but it is the Bible which assures him that verily there *is* a reward for the righteous; it is the promise given him in the Bible, which leads him to look, with St. Peter, for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. He knows that if he has really fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before him in the Gospel, he is the heir of a promise which has been confirmed by the oath of Jehovah, and which has the immutability of His counsel to ensure the fulfilment of it. He draws from it therefore strong consolation, and derives from it a hope, which is as an anchor to his soul, sure and steadfast. Then let the promise in the text animate us, and excite us to diligence in our Christian course. The way may be narrow, desolate, and dreary;—but if we lean on that everlasting arm which is placed underneath us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, we are sure of heaven at the end of our journey.—*C. Bradley.*

Let Thy love shine upon my soul, and chase
This mistiness and darkness quite away,
Till faith discerns her holy resting-place
Distinctly, in the perfect light of day.

MARCH 28.

"Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour."—TITUS ii. 10.

OUR LORD was, as our Church expresses it in one of her Collects, "both a sacrifice for sin, and also an example of a godly life." By His sacrifice He procured us grace to follow His example, which otherwise would have been proposed to us in vain. By His example He showed us how to make a right use of that grace, which, unless we do, is given to us in vain. He who regards Christ as an example, and not as a Redeemer, will be lost because he does not follow Him. He who takes Him for a Redeemer, and not for an example, will be lost because he does not follow Him. Since Redemption was in order to holiness, and though it be most certain that without Christ no man can attain unto holiness, it is no less certain, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."—*Bishop Horne.*

He is a path, if any be misled;
  He is a robe, if any naked be;
If any chance to hunger, He is bread;
  If any be a bondman, He is free;
If any be but weak, how strong is He;
To dead men life He is, to sick men health;
To blind men sight, and to the needy wealth:
A pleasure without loss, a treasure without stealth.

MARCH 29.

"Sweeter than honey, and the honeycomb."—Ps. lxix. 10.

RELIGIOUS love is more excellent than religious faith, or hope, or joy, or gratitude, or the admiration of the grand and the beautiful in wisdom, inasmuch as it is the sentiment which results from the harmonious concurrence and combination of them all. We may compare it to the light of Heaven, or the sunbeam. . . . . All the hues of the rainbow meet and are concentrated for the production of that pure light, which instrumentally is the fountain of life and gladness to the whole animated world. And even so we may aver of that pure love of Heaven which hath respect to the love of God. That all the beautiful susceptibilities of the human heart are concentrated at this point, to constitute that gracious element, without which all spiritual existence must sicken and expire. The Psalmist himself compares the love of God to honey for its sweetness.

"Sweeter than honey, and the honeycomb." Following out his illustration, we affirm in like manner of religious love, that just as honey owes all its sweetness to its being gathered from far and near, by busiest, nicest art, from all rich fragrances, and the choicest of flowers that open to the summer's sun, even so is this love the most excellent of all the graces, because itself, as it were, the quintessence, the collected concentrated beauty and sweetness of them all.

John Bruce.

Of more esteem than golden mines,
  Or gold refined with skill;
More sweet than honey, or the drops
  That from the comb distil.

MARCH 30.

"He will keep the feet of His saints."—1 SAM. ii. 9.

"CAST your care upon the Lord, knowing for most certain that He is careful for you. With Him are all the hairs of your head numbered, so that not one of them shall perish. Hang on the providence of God, not only when you have means to help you, but also when you have no means, yea, when all means be against you. Believe that you are His children through Christ; that He is your Father and God through Him; that He loveth you, pardoneth all your offences; that He is with you in trouble, and will be with you for ever. Before you call upon Him, He heareth you: out of evil He will finally deliver you, and bring you to His eternal kingdom. Doubt not, my dearly beloved, this will God your Father do for you, in respect, not of yourselves, but of Christ, out of whose hands none shall be able to wrest you. In Him be quiet, and often consider your dignity; namely, that you be God's children, the saints of God, citizens of Heaven, "temples of the Holy Ghost," the thrones of God, "members of Christ," and lords over all. Therefore be ashamed to think, speak, or do anything that should be unseemly for God's children, God's saints, or Christ's members. To Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end." Amen.—*John Bradford.*

Change from glory into glory,
  Till in Heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
  Lost in wonder, love, and grace.

MARCH 31.

"He is able to succour."—HEB. ii. 18.

WHERE is the sorrow—nay, where is the joy, so it be a true joy; pure, that is, and innocent; which we may not carry to our adorable Redeemer, secure of His sympathy and of His brotherly heart? Is it pain we suffer, and the body's weakness? He has known them. Disgrace, unkindness, ingratitude? He has felt them. The sickness of those we love, and bereavements? He has wept for them. Temptation and the solicitations of evil? He has met and overcome them. Sin, indeed, He had not, could not have; but sin's burden He has borne, and has atoned for all sin: and He who pardoned Peter, and lodged with Zaccheus, and bade the weeping penitent go and sin no more—"the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"—still permits, invites the labouring sin-burdened soul to come to Him, that He may give it rest: "And him that cometh unto Him, He will in no wise cast out." . . . No wonder that the love of the Saviour is the life of religion. No wonder that "grace is with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" and that the curse of the Gospel is on every man who loves Him not.—*Bishop Jackson.*

Oh, who could bear Life's stormy doom,
  Did not Thy Wing of Love
Come brightly wafting through the gloom
  Our Peace-branch from above?
Then sorrow, touch'd by Thee, grows bright,
  With more than rapture's ray;
As darkness shows us worlds of light
  We never saw by day!

APRIL 1.

"And He bearing His cross went forth."—JOHN xix. 17.

How can the meditation on His sufferings otherwise than inflame our hearts with love, to think what sharp pain, and what indignity and shame our Saviour willingly endured for us? This consideration should render us very humble, and sensible of our weakness, vileness, and wretchedness. Is it not madness for us to be conceited of any worth in ourselves, to confide in any merit of our works, to glory in anything belonging to us? What more palpable confutation can there be of human arrogance and vanity, of all lofty imaginations, presumptuous confidences, self-pleasings, and self-admirings, than in that tragical cross? How can it also but deter us from the wilful commission of sin, to consider that by it we do "crucify afresh the Son of God, and put Him to open shame," despising all His kind endeavours for our salvation, and defeating His gracious purposes? . . . "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen."—*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Vile, I to the fountain fly—
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!

APRIL 2.

"Grace to help in time of need."—HEB. iv. 16.

THERE is a strange propensity in some minds, to be continually anticipating these times of need. We often find ourselves inquiring, "Oh, what should I do if this or that affliction should befall me? How would my poor soul bear to have this or that friend taken from me, to be reduced to poverty, to have to struggle with pain and disease, and death?" Now this anxiety about future trials is, too often, sinful. It occupies too much of our thoughts; it has its origin in distrust of God; it silences the voice of thankfulness, and leads to gloominess and discontent. "Take no thought for the morrow," says Christ, "for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." "Grace to help" shall come when it is needed; but why should it come before? We shall have grace to suffer in a suffering season, and grace to die in a dying season. As our days are, so shall our strength be. What then does this teach us? It tells us when we find our souls beginning to be anxious about future emergencies, to stop them short by asking whether at the present moment we do not want grace to root out anxiety and distrust from our minds, and to teach us submission to the will of God.—*C. Bradley.*

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread,
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

APRIL 3.

"Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."—HEB. iii. 1.

THAT Jesus Christ is, in doing and in suffering, our supreme and matchless example, is a truth; but that He is nothing further, and came for no other end, is a high point of falsehood. For how should man be enabled to learn and follow that example of obedience, unless there were more than an example in Christ? and what would become of that great reckoning of disobedience that man stands guilty of? No; these are notions far too narrow. He came "to bear our sins in His own body on the tree," and for this purpose had a body fitted for Him and given Him to bear this burden; to do this as the will of His Father; and "by that will," says the Apostle, "we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." It was His business, not only to rectify sinful man by His example, but to redeem him by His blood. "He was a teacher come from God," He is "a Prophet, and more than a prophet"—a Priest satisfying justice and a King conquering sin and death; an example, indeed, but more than an example—our Sacrifice and our Life, our *all in all!* It is our duty to walk as He walked, but our salvation lies in this, that "He is the propitiation for our sins."

Archbishop Leighton.

Jesus, let me seek for nought,
  But that Thou should'st dwell in me;
Let this only fill my thought,
  How I may grow like Thee,
Through this earthly care and strife,
Through the calm eternal life.

APRIL 4.

"Consider how great things He hath done for you."—
1 SAM. xii. 24.

GIVING of thanks, and praise, and honour, and glory unto God, shall remain in the kingdom of Heaven and of glory. It is now the continual blessed exercise of the glorious angels and saints in Heaven; and it shall be ours, when we shall be translated thither. Oh that we would learn often to practise here what we hope shall be our eternal exercise there! Oh that we would accustom ourselves, being "filled in the Spirit," to speak to ourselves in "psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!" Consider the multitude, and variety, and continuance of God's blessings:—If thou hadst received but one, or a few of those benefits, yet thanks were due, more than thou art able to return. But how canst thou excuse thine unthankfulness? When His mercies are renewed every morning—nay, every moment—His angels are about thee, though thou knowest it not—from a thousand unknown dangers He delivereth thee, which thou suspectedst not. Thy very life and being thou owest to Him:—resolve, then, *to serve Him in truth with all your heart, for "consider how great things He hath done for you."*

Bishop Sanderson.

When thou hast thank'd thy God for every blessing sent,
What time will there be left for murmur or lament?

APRIL 5.

"I will fear no evil."—Ps. xxiii. 4.

To fear no evil "in the valley of the shadow of death," is a blessed privilege open to every true believer. For death shall be to him no death at all; but a very deliverance from death, from all pains, cares, and sorrows, miseries, and wretchedness of this world; and the very entry into rest, and the beginning of everlasting joy: a tasting of heavenly pleasures so great, that neither tongue is able to express, nor eye to see, nor ear to hear them, no, nor any earthly man's heart to conceive them. . . . And to comfort all Christian persons herein, Holy Scripture calleth this bodily death a sleep, wherein man's senses be, as it were, taken from him for a season, and yet, when he awaketh, he is more fresh than when he went to bed! . . . Thus is this bodily death a door or entering into life, and therefore not so much dreadful, if it be rightly considered, as it is comfortable; not a mischief, but a remedy for all mischief; no enemy, but a friend; not a cruel tyrant, but a gentle guide; leading us not to mortality, but to immortality—not to sorrow and pain, but to joy and pleasure, and that to endure for ever.—*Homily against the Fear of Death.*

Let sea, and earth, and sky
Wage war against me; on my front I show
Their mighty Maker's seal! In vain they try
To end my life, who can but end its woe.
Is that a death-bed where the Christian lies?
Yes! but not *his*: "'Tis death itself that dies!"

APRIL 6.

"To bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."—ACTS iii. 26.

HAD the world been left to choose its own blessing, we may question whether this would have been the one desired. To bless you, by removing the diseases which weigh down the corruptible body—to bless you, by diminishing the labour which the necessities of life require—to bless you, by making less self-denial requisite, and more indulgence allowable—these, perhaps, would be natural thoughts or wishes. But the thoughts of God "are not as our thoughts;" and He "having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless us in turning away every one of us from his iniquities." In His sight, then, this was the blessing which men really needed; and this was the work to effect which the Saviour came. Not to introduce a new and different law, as if God could be served with half a heart, with such a share of obedience as men might choose to pay —not to atone for transgression unrepented or unforsaken—but to restore men to love, and service, and favour of their Creator, by turning them away from those iniquities which separate them from Him. May it be our daily concern and aim to secure that blessing for ourselves!—*Archbishop Sumner.*

Endless life in Him possessing,
  Let us praise His precious name;
Glory, honour, power, and blessing,
  Be for ever to the Lamb.

APRIL 7.

"Lord, Thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth."—ACTS iv. 24.

ST. BASIL called the world a school wherein reasonable souls are taught the knowledge of God. In a musical instrument, when we observe divers strings meet in a harmony, we conclude that some skilful musician tuned them. When we see thousands of men in a field marshalled under several colours, all yielding exact obedience, we infer that there is a general to whose commands they are all subject. In a watch, when we take notice of great and small wheels, all so fitted as to concur to an orderly motion, we acknowledge the skill of our artificer. When we come into a printing house, and see a great number of different letters so ordered as to make a book, the consideration hereof maketh it evident that there is a composer, by whose art they were brought into such a frame. When we behold a fine building, we conclude it had an architect; a stately ship, well rigged, and safely conducted to the port, that it hath a pilot. So here, the visible world is such an instrument, army, watch, book, building, ship, as undeniably argueth a God, who was and is the tuner, general, and artificer, the composer, architect, and pilot of it.—*John Arrowsmith.*

There is a book, who runs may read,
  Which heavenly truth imparts,
And all the lore its scholars need
  Pure eyes and Christian hearts.

The works of God above, below,
  Within us and around,
Are pages in that book, to show
  How God Himself is found

APRIL 8.

"While I was musing, the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue."—Ps. xxxix. 3.

STRIVE then to be serious and thoughtful—seriousness may be the means of leading you to Christ, and thoughtfulness to Heaven. Pray for a feeling heart. Welcome the bitterest afflictions, which, through grace, may force you to think of your soul and eternity. Be thankful for everything which has a tendency to render you dissatisfied with the wages of vanity and sin, and to lead you to seek the paths of wisdom and God. These paths are lying open before you, if you have but a sincere desire to walk in them; and there is a Holy Spirit appointed and waiting to lead you to them, and to guide your feet into the way of peace. Commit yourself, therefore, my brother, to His gracious guidance; seek it by prayer. If you seek it in earnest, you will not seek it in vain. He will restore your wandering soul, and lead you in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake. He will instruct you, as He leads you about; and when He has taught you all that the waste and howling wilderness is designed to teach you, He will remove you from its agitating scenes, and place you in the peaceful and blessed paradise of your God.—*C. Bradley.*

Then droop not in sorrow,
  Despond not in fear,
A glorious to-morrow
  Is brightening and near;
When—blessed reward
  Of each faithful endeavour—
Christians with Christ shall be
  Soon and for ever.

APRIL 9.

"Strangers and pilgrims on the earth."—HEB xi. 13.

ALTHOUGH the traveller's chief and first delight is the recollection of his home, which lies as a cordial at his heart, and refreshes him at all seasons, this does by no means prevent him from taking that pleasure in the several objects on the road, which they are capable of affording, and intended to afford. He surveys the works and beauties of nature and art, but leaves them without a sigh, reflecting on the far greater and sincerer joys that are waiting for him at home. Such exactly is the disposition with which the Christian should pass through the world. His religion does not require him to be gloomy and sullen, to shut his eyes or to stop his ears. It directs him not to shut himself up in a cloister, alone, but to walk abroad, to behold the things which are in heaven and earth, and to give glory to Him who made them; reflecting, that if in this fallen world there are so many objects to delight him, what must be the pleasures of that world which is to be his eternal home. From fading scenes he carries his thoughts to the paradise of God, to the heavenly Jerusalem whose walls are salvation, and gates praise!—*Bishop Horne.*

O God, O good beyond compare!
If thus Thy meaner works are fair;
If thus Thy bounties gild the span
Of ruin'd earth and sinful man;
How glorious must the mansion be
Where Thy redeem'd shall dwell with Thee.

APRIL 10.

"The City of the Living God."—HEB. xii. 22.

HEAVEN is represented in Scripture under every pleasing variety of figure which can possibly attract the heart and rivet the affection. The absence of all pain, the possession of all pleasure, the perpetual uninterrupted enjoyment of God's favour, and presence, and blessing: all these go to make up the perfection of its bliss. "There shall be no more crying, nor sorrow, nor pain; for the former things are passed away." "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." "There shall be no more death," because there shall be no more sin. "They have come out of great tribulation," come out of it for ever. "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. . . . The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." To this we may add the Apostle's sublime declaration of what is written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."—*John Scott.*

The Lamb is the undying light
  Of that fair city. Yea,
There is no time, no moon, no night,
  He sheds Eternal Day:
While glory to the saints is given,
Like that which clothes the sun in heaven.

APRIL 11.

"It is a good thing that the heart be established with grace."
HEB. xiii. 9.

THY whole conduct through life depends upon the nature of the salvation of which thou art a partaker by grace. Consider it attentively. The growing knowledge of it will engage thine affections to a willing obedience. Is it not a complete salvation—an absolutely perfect work—yea, the greatest work of God? Because all the rest come from it, and lead to it. Is it not the infinitely wise continuance of the eternal Three for which everlasting glory is to be given to every divine attribute? When every other work of God shall cease, for this all heaven will to eternity be ascribing honour, and blessing, and praise to Father, Son, and Spirit. Attend, oh! my soul, to the Scripture account of this salvation. Review the glory of it. Read again and again the revealed descriptions of it till thy heart be satisfied that this salvation is as perfect and complete as the Lord God Almighty could make it. This is its character. Hast thou studied it well, and art thou well grounded and established in the belief of it? O pray then, be earnest in prayer, that God would enlarge thy views of the everlasting perfect salvation which is in Christ Jesus.—*William Romaine.*

To Christ, the sun that lightens
His Church above, below,
The Father, and the Spirit,
Let praise for ever flow.

APRIL 12.

"Drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."—JAMES i. 14.

LOOK well to this, ye who venture within the precincts of forbidden pleasure under a notion that your sin, if any, is but a little one, and that your religious principles will not be seriously impaired. Temptation wins upon the soul by secret and almost insensible gradations. A first acquaintance with sin is by degrees improved into familiarity, the heart's aversion to it is lessened, and at length is changed into love. Our first and most earnest prayer then ought to be "Lead us not into temptation." Great as is the believer's privilege of asking for grace to support him under all the trials of his faith, when they come upon him, it is a still more blessed thing to be preserved from falling into temptation by God's preventing grace, to which indeed it is to be ascribed that all men are not tempted to the worst sins, and that the world is not a scene of wickedness and disorder. . . . Secure yourselves against temptations by putting away every habit which may lead to forgetfulness of God. "Lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset you"—the more easily from its apparent insignificance—"and run with patience the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith."

Bishop Blomfield.

Keep us from the world unspotted,
From all earthly passions free;
Wholly to Thyself devoted,
Fix'd to live and die for Thee.

APRIL 13.

"A devout man."—ACTS x. 2.

A DEVOUT man is he that ever sees the Invisible, and ever trembleth before that God he sees. He hath looked down to the bottomless deep, and seen with horror what he deserves to feel everlastingly. His cries have been as strong as his fears great; and he hath found mercy more ready to rescue him than he could be importunate. The sense of this mercy hath raised him to an unspeakable joy, to a most fervent love of so dear a Redeemer; that love hath knit his heart to so meritorious a Deliverer, and wrought a blessed union between God and his soul. He comes reverently to the oracles of God, and brings not his eye but his heart with him; not negligent in seeking to know the revealed will of his Maker, nor too inquisitive into His deep counsels; not too remiss in the letter, nor too presumptuous in the sense; gladly comprehending what he may, and admiring what he cannot comprehend. Finally, as he well knows that he lives, and moves, and hath his being in God, so he refers his life, motions, and being, wholly to God: so using all things as one that enjoys God in them; and, so walking on earth, that he doth in a manner carry his Heaven with him.—*Bishop Hall.*

Thou God, whom heavenly hosts obey,
  How highly blest is he,
Whose hope and truth, securely placed,
  Are still reposed on Thee!

APRIL 14.

"This wisdom descendeth not from above."—JAMES iii. 15.

BLESSED is the man, whatever the powers of his mind, and whatever the condition of his life, who cordially gives himself, under all circumstances, and with all his powers, to this "light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." Well may such a man delight himself in the Lord. For "the Lord is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever." This man is, indeed, a subject of Christ's spiritual kingdom. And the kingdom of grace is the kingdom of glory in commencement. And the kingdom of glory is the kingdom of grace in full, yet ever-growing perfection. Let us, then, duly estimate the greatness of our calling. Let us do so in the profound and pious language of a true Christian, and a true philosopher:* "The Divinity of Christians consists not in a God, the mere author of geometrical truths, and of elementary order: this is the religion of the pagans. It consists not merely in a God, who exercises a providence over the lives and estates of men, and bestows on His worshippers a happy course of temporal existence: this is the religion of the Jews. But the God of Christians is a God of love and consolation; He is a God whose infinite mercy unites itself to the inmost soul of His faithful followers; who fills them with humility, joy, and love; who renders them incapable of any other end than of Himself alone."—*Bishop Jebb.*

Fix my heart and eyes on Thine!
What are other objects worth?
But to see Thy glory shine
Is a Heaven begun on earth.

* Pascal.

APRIL 15.

"What is your life? it is even a vapour."—JAMES iv. 14.

TIME is short; when past, it cannot be recalled; when lost, it is, to use the language of Scripture, "as water spilt on the ground, that cannot be gathered up again." It is given us to work out, with the assistance of God's grace, and through the merits of His Son, our own sanctification, leading us to eternal happiness. Let us, then, compute, and make fair account; what portion of it have we hitherto devoted to these purposes? How much of it have we given on the one hand to the world, to the pursuits of gain, to the enticement of pleasures, to the gratification of our disorderly passions; and on the other, to the claims of religion, and to the faithful discharge of the duties we owe to God and to man? Let us fairly make up this account, and when conscience shall have cast up the balance, let us reflect that the former shall melt away like the visions of a morning dream, . . . while the other shall be remembered when "there shall be time no longer," and accompany us to that heavenly kingdom, where we shall rejoice in the Lamb that was slain" for us through the endless ages of eternity.—*Bishop O'Beirne.*

Cling not to this poor life: unlock thy clasp
  Of fleeting, vapoury air;
The world receding soon will mock thy grasp;
  But let the wings of prayer
Take the blest breeze of Heaven, and upward flee,
  And life from God shall enter thee.

APRIL 16.

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—JAMES v. 16.

THERE is no age without a cloud of witnesses of the infallible efficacy of prayer. Ask those in our generation, who really conform to the Christian rule and copy the example of their Lord, what has given them such mastery over their passions, such sweet complacency and goodwill towards all men, such a readiness to be directed and governed by the Word of God? and they will unanimously declare, that not by their own power, wisdom, or resolution; not through any original better formation of their tempers, or the advantages of education; but through the grace of God, obtained by prayer, they are what they are. On the contrary, there is not a slave to sin within the pale of the Christian Church, but he is condemned in his own conscience, either as an utter despiser of prayer, or as a mere formal trifler in it; such an one, therefore, experiences no deliverance from the power of evil tempers, nor gains the least ground against them. Real Christian, you must value prayer, and be constant and unwearied in it; so will the same bountiful God, "whose ears are ever open to the prayers of His faithful people," give you an abundant entrance into His Kingdom, where petitions will be no more, because want will be no more—but every expression of the soul be Praise.—*Henry Venn.*

I bent before thy gracious throne,
And ask'd for peace with suppliant knee;
And peace was given—nor peace alone,
But faith, and hope, and ecstacy!

APRIL 17.

"Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."—1 PET. i. 2.

IF there is any word which can excite in the human breast pleasing sensations, it is the word *peace.* If there is any blessing truly desirable, it is the blessing peace. It is as sweet to the children of men, as the long-wished-for shore to the mariner. It is as reviving as the warm breezes of the spring to the man who has just risen from a bed of sickness. How welcome are the tidings of eternal peace to a nation, which has long been accustomed to the sound of war! How beautiful the feet of them who publish it! What gladness fills every heart! What joy sits on every countenance! What praises and thanksgivings are heard from every tongue! To bring down this blessing from above, was the great object of our Saviour's appearing on the earth. Hence the prophecies which announced the coming of the Messiah, spoken of Him under the character of the Prince of Peace. What, then, is this peace? Is it an exemption from the calamities of life? What says the Giver of it? "In the world ye shall have tribulation." The peace which Jesus came down from heaven to bring, is *peace with God*, reconciliation with that great and Holy Being, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."—*C. Bradley.*

There was joy in heaven!
There was joy in heaven!
When the billows, heaving dark,
Sank around the stranded ark,
And the rainbow's watery span
Spake of mercy, hope to man,
And *peace* with God in heaven.

APRIL 18.

"If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."—1 PET. ii. 3.

WHEN once we have tasted the grace of God, the sweetnesses of His Spirit; then no food but "the food of angels," no cup but "the cup of salvation," the divine cup, in which we drink salvation to our God, and call upon the name of the Lord with ravishment and thanksgiving. And there is no greater external testimony that we are in the Spirit, and the Spirit in us, than if we find joy and delight and spiritual pleasure in the greatest mysteries of our religion, if we communicate often with an unwearied devotion and a heart truly fixed upon God and upon the offices of a holy worship. If it were given any of us to see paradise, or the third heaven (as it was St. Paul), could it be that ever we should love any thing but Christ, or follow any guide but the Spirit, or desire any thing but heaven? Now what a vision can do, that the Spirit does certainly to them that entertain Him; they "esteem all things as loss, so that they may gain Christ." No gain is pleasant but godliness, no ambition but longing after heaven, no revenge but against themselves for sinning; nothing but God and Christ.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

Fain would my heart henceforward be
Fix'd, O my God! alone on Thee;
That heart and soul by Thee possest,
May find in Thee their perfect rest.
Oh, take away whate'er has stood
Between me and the highest good;
I ask no better boon than this,
To find in God my only bliss!

APRIL 19.

"Be pitiful."—1 PET. iii. 8.

CHRISTIAN pity is divine; there is of natural pity most in the best and most ingenuous natures; but where it is spiritual, it is a prime lineament of the image of God; and the more absolute and disengaged it is, in regard of those towards whom it acts, the more it is like unto God, looking upon misery as a sufficient incentive of piety and mercy, without the ingredient of any other consideration. God is our pattern in love and compassions; we are well warranted to endeavour to be like Him in this. Men esteem much more of some other virtues that make more show, and trample upon these—love and compassion and meekness; but though these violets grow low, and are of a dark colour, yet they are of a very sweet and diffusive smell, odoriferous graces; and the Lord propounds Himself our example in them.—*Archbishop Leighton.*

Gentle thoughts and gentle words
Ever were thy Saviour Lord's;
Shall the fellow-worm reprove
When the holy God is—Love?
Rain, and dews, and sunshine fall
With unbounded Love on all;
Shall thy narrow heart refuse
Its poor sun, and rain, and dews?

APRIL 20.

"Who redeemeth thy life from destruction."—Ps. ciii. 4.

GIVE me, O Lord, true repentance; give me faith in the sufferings of Christ, and why should I despair? The sense of utter despair; the certainty that we have no hope; the knowledge that we are utterly forsaken by God, and that we are doomed and sentenced to everlasting death; that hell is around us, and within us, and is our lot for ever and ever—who could bear this thought abiding in him, and live? This, however, is not the greatest of the evils from which we are saved by the sacrifice of the death of Christ, for such despair is an evil which human nature refuses to dwell with.—No, the worst evil from which we are delivered by the precious sacrifice of Christ, is not this fierce agony of despair; it is rather the cold dead palsy, the heavy lethargy of careless, hopeless ungodliness, that is the danger—the great and urgent danger of the soul. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you life."

Dean R. Butler.

When we in darkness walk,
  Nor feel the heavenly flame,
Then is the time to trust our God,
  And rest upon His name.
Soon shall our doubts and fears
  Subside at His control;
His loving-kindness shall break through
  The midnight of the soul.

APRIL 21.

"Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about."
1 PET. v. 8.

HE goeth about each of us; and as an enemy that makes siege upon men who are shut within, he spies the walls, and tries whether there may be some part of our members less stedfast and less sure, by access of which he may gain entrance to the inner places. To our eyes he offers alluring images and easy pleasures. He tries the ears with melodious music, that by listening to sweetest sounds, he may relax and enervate our Christian vigour: the tongue he provokes by revilings; the hand, by provocation of injuries, he stirs up to the wantonness of murder. To make man dishonest he sets unjust gains before him; that money may make the soul its captive, he loads up the heap of pernicious gatherings: promises earthly honours, that he may take away the heavenly: holds out the show of false things, that he may steal the real: and when he cannot deceive unseen, he threatens and stretches out the dread of persecution, that he may subdue the servants of God; ever unjust, and ever adverse, deceitful in peace, and violent in persecution.—*St. Cyprian.*

God is our refuge, tried and proved,
  Amid a stormy world;
We will not fear though earth be moved,
  And hills in ocean hurl'd.

When earth and hell against us came,
  He spake, and quell'd their powers:
The Lord of Hosts is still the same,
  The God of grace is ours.

APRIL 22.

"Thy mercy is greater than the Heavens."—Ps. cviii. 4.—

In God's first book, the Book of Life, mercy has so much a precedency and primogeniture, as that there is nothing in it but mercy. In God's other book, His book of Scripture, in which He is often put to denounce judgments, as well as to exhibit mercy, still the tide sets that way. . . . So He began the book. He made man in His own image, and then He blessed him. There is no malediction mingled in God's first act, in God's first purpose upon man: in paradise he is told that if he eat the forbidden fruit he shall die: but before that God had said, "Of every tree in the garden thou mayest freely eat." . . . There are elder pictures in the world of water than there are of oil; but those of oil have got above them, and shall outlive them. Water is a frequent emblem of affliction in the Scriptures; and so is oil of mercy. If at any time God seemed to begin with water, with a judgment, yet the oil will get to the top; in that judgment you may see that God had first a merciful purpose in inflicting it, for His mercy is His firstborn. "His mercy is new every morning," not only every day, but as soon as it is day.—*John Donne, D.D.*

O measureless might, ineffable love!
While angels delight to hymn Thee above,
The humble creation, tho' feeble their lays,
With true adoration, shall sing to Thy praise.

APRIL 23.

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations."
2 PET. ii. 9.

As the Lord Jesus is, in the narrative of the Temptation, set before us as resisting and defeating our great enemy, so the faithful Christian soul will ever look to Him direct both for strength in this life, and rest from all trials in the life to come. To Him, to Christ direct; for it is of the very essence of the real Gospel to bring each faithful, burdened, trembling soul direct to Him without intervening mediation. The Lord who died for us, who washes our souls freely in His precious blood, who loves us with an everlasting love, is ready to guard you and me in temptation, and He has opened up to us the hope of reaching speedily a peaceful haven, where we can never more be tempted. What a soothing thought is this as to our friends who sleep in Jesus: for them the world's rough blasts blow harmless now, through Christ's mercy; the raging of the evil spirit cannot reach them. . . . If he looks wistfully into that peaceful fold, he must see that even if he could enter amongst them he could not creep into their hearts. . . . They are safe as Christ Himself . . . safe from temptation as from sorrow, for evermore.—*Bishop Tait.*

Oh for that bright and happy land,
Where—far amid the blest—
"The wicked cease from troubling, and
The weary are at rest;"
Where friends are never parted,
Once met around Thy throne,
And none are broken-hearted,
Since all with Thee are one!

APRIL 24.

"Be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace."—
2 PET. iii. 14.

CONTENTMENT is a humble and willing submitting ourselves to God's pleasure in all conditions. Thus it makes men carry themselves gracefully in wealth, want, health, sickness, freedom, fetters—yea, in what condition soever God allots them. Pious meditations much advantage contentment in adversity. Such as these are to consider, first, that more are beneath us than above us; secondly, many of God's dear saints have been in the same condition; thirdly, we want superfluities rather than necessaries; fourthly, the more we have, the more must we account for; fifthly, earthly blessings, through man's corruption, are more prone to be abused than well used; sixthly, we must leave all earthly wealth at our death, and "riches avail not in the day of wrath;" seventhly, the less we have, the less it will grieve us to leave this world; and lastly, it is the will of God, and therefore both for His glory and our own good, whereof we ought to be well assured.—*Thomas Fuller, D.D.*

My spirit to the chastening stroke
  I meekly would resign,
Nor murmur at the heaviest yoke
  That tells me I am Thine.
Give me the spirit of Thy trust
  To suffer as a son—
To say, though lying in the dust,
  "My Father's will be done!"

APRIL 25.

St. Mark.

"Grow up into Him in all things."—EPH. iv. 15.

THE children of God are known by their uniform endeavours after holiness. They cannot wilfully live in any known sin; they will search out their corruptions in order to subdue them, and their duties to fulfil them. They place the Lord Jesus before them as their pattern, and though they cannot hope to attain absolute perfection in this life, they will not rest satisfied with any thing short of it; they long to be holy, as God is holy; and perfect, as He is perfect. They consider how their great pattern acted in reference to God, and to man; and they labour to follow His example, and to walk in all things as He walked. They are impelled, by a sense of duty, to present themselves living sacrifices to God, knowing this to be their reasonable service: and from a sense of gratitude, they desire to walk worthy of Him who hath called them unto His kingdom and glory! and, moreover, by a love of holiness itself, for they esteem all His precepts concerning all things to be right, and *hate every false way.—W. Marsh, D.D.*

O for that deep devotion,
  That grace, whose strength within
Subdues each wild emotion
  Suggested here by sin:
Uplifts each warm affection,
  And lays it at Thy feet,
Assured that no rejection
  The contrite soul shall meet.

APRIL 26.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet."—Ps. cxix. 105.

As the Word of God is the light to direct us, and to detect errors, so it is also the standard and beam to try the weights of truth and falsehood. Therefore our Lord, knowing that there should be such confusion of things in the latter days, commandeth that Christians, who live in the profession of Christian faith, and are desirous to settle themselves upon a sure ground of faith, should go to no other thing but to the Scriptures. Otherwise, if they had regard to other things, they should be offended and perish, and not understand which is the true Church. The master of a ship, when he is on the main sea, casts his eye always upon the lode-star, and so directs and guides his ways. Even so must we, who are passengers and strangers in this world, ever settle our eyes to behold the Word of God: so shall no tempest overblow us; so shall we be guided without danger; so shall we safely arrive in the haven of our rest. This is the rule of our faith. . . . Therefore Christ saith, "Search the Scriptures; they are they that testify of Me."

Bishop Jewell.

O child of sorrow, be it thine to know
That Scripture only is the cure of woe;
That field of promise—how it flings abroad
Its perfume o'er the Christian's thorny road.
The soul, reposing in assured belief,
Feels herself happy amidst all her grief;
Forgets her labour as she toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song.

APRIL 27.

"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."—1 JOHN iii. 14.

MY brother, we are now upon earth, masters of our own conduct, and accountable to no one here for the tempers which we cherish, or the dispositions we show . . . we may hate our enemies, and refuse to forgive an injury; we may "pass by on the other side," while our neighbour is in grievous want; we may spend our substance in selfish gratifications, or lay it up for our children, and refuse to bestow any portion of it upon the bodies or souls of our poorer brethren; and, at the same time, none have a right to call us to account, except by a friendly warning: God leaves us to follow our own bent; no fire comes down from heaven to consume the churlish, or the malicious; the sun shines alike on the merciful and on the uncharitable; and the rain fertilizes alike those fields which spread their bounty upon God's needy creatures, and those which enrich no one but their covetous owner. But it will not be always so. There will be a time when we must render an account. The question will then be, Have you used your strength to injure, your wit to insult, your power to oppress? Then, you have borne the name, but you have *not* possessed the spirit of a Christian.

Archbishop Sumner.

Our God is love; and all His saints
His image bear below:
The heart with love to God inspired,
With love to man will glow.

APRIL 28.

"He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God."—1 JOHN iv. 16.

AND what doth the Lord require of thee, but only love? But how great a thing is love! Love brought Him down hither to us; and love will carry us up to God. Love made Him like to man; and love is able to make thee like to God. Oh, the power of heavenly love! how shall we get it planted in our hearts? how, but by love? The frequent meditation of this admirable love of God in His Son, Jesus Christ, will not suffer us not to love Him with all our heart, soul, and strength. Let us resolve, then, that the remembrance of His love shall lie perpetually in our heart. What more welcome thought can there be to thee every morning when thou awakest, than this—I am the beloved of the King of Glory? With what canst thou open thy soul more cheerfully? What will brighten it, and chase away the darkness of melancholy sorrow, sadness, cares and fears, like to this? Let the morning light bring Jesus ever along with it to thy mind, and enkindle in thee a new devotion to Him.—*Bishop Patrick.*

New every morning is the love
Our wakening and uprising prove:
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life, and power, and thought.

New mercies each returning day,
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

APRIL 29.

"This is the record that God hath given to us."—1 JOHN v. 11.

THE word *Gospel* is the old English word *God-spel*, that is, good speech, good news, good hearing, good tidings. . . . The gospel holds forth to poor sinners that there is an eternal, infinite love in God's breast to them. A man might think that God would hate such an one as I am; and reason would think that love should proceed from something amiable in the object, some beauty or bounty; but God sees me to be wicked and sinful, and therefore wisdom would think that God must condemn me world without end. The gospel comes to such a sinner and tells him that the case is otherwise. It is not so, poor sinful man or woman; and though God hates sin above all things in heaven or hell, yet God loved thee, knowing what thou wert. God hath a special love to thy poor soul, yet hates thy sin: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." There was a love in God out of which He gave His Son Jesus Christ to die for us. When I was an enemy to God, He was my friend; when I hated Him, He loved me; nay, before I was, God had thoughts of an infinite, eternal love to me.

Walter Cradock.

Oh! for this love, let rocks and hills
  Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
  The Saviour's praises speak!
Angels, assist our mighty joys,
  Strike all your harps of gold!
But, when you raise your highest notes
  His love can ne'er be told.

APRIL 30.

"Whose I am, and whom I serve."—ACTS xxvii. 23.

READER, I would shape this text into a question, and ask whose you are, and whom you serve? Is it the world, or is it the Lord? Is it sin, or is it Christ? What says your conscience? Will it allow you to believe that you belong to the right owner? that by a solemn act of self-surrender you have given yourself to the Lord? Have you said in effect, as holy David, "O Lord, I am thy servant"? Have you acted on the exhortation of St. Paul in Romans vi., and yielded yourselves unto God, 'as those that are alive from the dead'? Oh, how happy if it be so! How happy if you have cast away the false liberty of sin, for the service which is "perfect freedom;" if you have gone into Christ's hands, both for the pardon of sin, and the direction of your life! Let us pray we may never slip the blessed yoke, but have it fastened closer day by day, so that every action of our lives may tell "whose we are, and whom we serve."

Arthur Roberts.

Christian! thy God deems nothing due,
But what He gives thee grace to do;
And nought as worthy doth He take,
Save what is done for Jesu's sake:
With such pure trust and simple aim,
Thy lowliest deed His smile may claim.

MAY 1.

St. Philip and St. James.

"Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us."—JOHN xiv. 8.

THIS prayer of Philip, though he may not have intended it, does indeed express a great truth: namely, that the knowledge of God is what can alone satisfy man's soul; as it is written, "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace." It is well if we are taught this, and are ever praying that this knowledge may be increased and confirmed in us. And we must remember, that as this acquaintance with God, in this world at least, depends on the measure and liveliness of faith, for it cannot be gained by sight: so also, if we would indeed have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to shine in our hearts, we must look for it in the face of Jesus Christ. "He is in the Father, and the Father in Him:" "He who hath seen Him, hath seen the Father:" "The Father is glorified in Him." He is the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, nor to those mansions in His Father's house, in which He is preparing a place for His people, but by Him. "O Almighty God, whom truly to know is everlasting life; grant us perfectly to know Thy Son Jesus Christ to be the way, the truth, and the life." Amen.—*Bishop Trower.*

Thou Holy One of God!
The Father rests in Thee,
And in the savour of that blood
Once shed on Calvary.
The curse is gone—through Thee we're blest:
God rests in Thee—in Thee we rest.

MAY 2.

"God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."—1 JOHN iv. 16.

"THE fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Temperance—the self-restraint which gives no needless pain to any human being, which is reticent, modest, courteous, gracious, and full of grace, and of all else which makes human beings lovely in the eyes of their fellow men: because out of their morals, and therefore out of their manners, shines out that precious Spirit of love, which is the Spirit of God. Happy are such, yea, blessed. They, and they alone, are the peacemakers, who shall be called the children of God. They, and they alone, are the pure in heart, who shall see God. For in God's light they see light, and the world is bright to them through all its sadness. And in God's love they feel love, and all mankind is precious to them, in spite of all its follies. They, in their deeds, their words, their manners, often their very faces, and their voices, reflect that eternal love, which is light, and that eternal light, which is love. They, and they alone, enter here, now, in this world, into that high beatitude—"He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

Canon Kingsley.

Such let my life be here:
Not marked by noise, but by success alone;
Not known by bustle, but by useful deeds,
Quiet and gentle, clear and fair as light;
Yet full of its all-penetrating power,
Its silent but resistless influence;
Making no needless sound, yet ever working,
Hour after hour, upon a needy world!

MAY 3.

"And thou shalt call His name Jesus."—MATT. i. 21.

WHO so dead, that hath not his senses raised up with delight when he remembereth the message of the Angel, "And thou shalt call His name Jesus." "This name Jesus," said St. Bernard, "it is honey in the mouth, harmony in the ear, melody in the heart." "This name Jesus," saith St. Anselm, "it is a name of comfort to sinners when they call upon Him;" therefore he himself saith, "Jesus be my Jesus." This name is above all names; first, for that it was consecrated from everlasting; secondly, for that it was given of God; thirdly, for that it was desired of the Patriarchs; fourthly, for that it was foretold of the Prophets; fifthly, for that it was accomplished in the time of grace, magnified in the Apostles, witnessed of the Martyrs, acknowledged and honoured shall it be of all believers unto the world's end. This name Jesus, it is compared to "oil poured out;" oil being kept close, it sendeth not forth such a savour, as it doth being poured out; and oil hath these properties, it suppleth, it cherisheth, it maketh look cheerfully; so doth this name of Jesus, it suppleth the hardness of our hearts, it cherisheth the weakness of our faith, enlighteneth the darkness of our soul, and maketh man look with a cheerful countenance towards the throne of grace.—*Christopher Sutton.*

Dear name, the Rock on which I build,
  My shield and hiding-place;
My never failing treasury, fill'd
  With boundless stores of grace.

MAY 4.

"Justified freely by His grace."—ROM. iii. 24.

SUCH as say, that faith only justifieth not, because other virtues be present, they cannot tell what they say. Every man that will have his conscience appeased, must mark these two things: *how* remission of sin is obtained, and *wherefore* it is obtained. Faith is the means whereby it is obtained; and the cause wherefore it is received, is the merits of Christ. Although faith be the means whereby it is received, yet hath neither faith, nor charity, nor contrition, nor the Word of God, nor all these knit together, sufficient merits wherefore we should obtain this remission of sin. But the only cause wherefore sin is forgiven, is the death of Christ. Now mark the words of St. Paul: "Freely," saith he, "we are justified by His grace." Let the man burst his heart with contrition, believe that God is good a thousand times, and burn in charity, yet shall not all these satisfy the law, nor deliver man from the ire of God, until such time as faith letteth fall all hope and confidence in the merits of such virtues as be in man, and say, "Lord, behold Thy unfruitful servant; only for the merits of Christ's blood give me remission of sins; for I know no man can be justified otherwise before Thee."

Bishop Hooper.

Grace taught my soul to pray,
And made my eyes o'erflow;
'Twas grace which kept me to this day
And will not let me go.

MAY 5.

"The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."—ISA. liii. 6.

OUR sins cannot hinder us, nor withdraw us from prayer; for they are gone, they are no sins, they cannot be hurtful to us. Christ dying for us, as all the Scripture, both of the New and Old Testament, witnesseth, "He hath taken away our sorrows." Like as when I owe unto a man a hundred pounds; the day is expired, he will have his money; I have it not, and for lack of it I am laid in prison. In such distress comes a good friend, and saith, Sir, be of good cheer, I will pay thy debts; and forthwith payeth the whole sum, and setteth me at liberty. Such a friend is our Saviour; He has paid our debts, and set us at liberty. Therefore, though our sins condemn us . . . "we have an Advocate with God the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." We have one Advocate, not many; neither saints, nor any body else, but only Him, and no other, neither by the way of mediation, nor by the way of redemption. He only is sufficient, for He only is the doer; let Him have all the praise. . . . "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."—*Bishop Latimer.*

My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear,
When hanging on th' accursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

MAY 6.

"Tribulation worketh patience."—ROM. v. 3.

HE that sets us in our journey, knows what is best for passengers, and therefore we may endure with comfort outward adversities when they come: we must not cast away the nut for the bitterness of the rind. Happy leprosy was it that made Naaman worship the God of Israel in his heart. The Prophet David saith, it is good for him to have been in trouble: if thou wert not troubled, perhaps thou wouldest not devoutly have called upon God, thou wouldest not have worshipped God, thou wouldest not have known God. The sharp storms of the winter, they make the trees bare; for a time they stand as dead, yet there remains still life in the root. In like manner, afflictions of the world make the members of Christ seem desolate, and the stormy winds of persecution scatter abroad the leaves of worldly prosperity, yet there is life in the root, there is faith and joy in the heart. . . . Wonderful it is to hear how St. Paul, endued with grace from Christ, doth even challenge and provoke tribulation and anguish and hunger; yea, life and death, as if he would speak like a man of courage to all the adversities of the world, "What shall separate me from the love of Christ?"—*Christopher Sutton, D.D.*

Lord, make these faithless hearts of ours
Such lesson learn from birds and flowers,
  Make them from self to cease;
Leave all things to a Father's will,
And taste, before Him lying still,
  E'en in affliction, peace.

MAY 7.

"Christ is all, and in all."—COL. iii. 2.

OH! that men would read their Bibles, and take warnings of faithful preachers. They would learn that when a man trusts, in any measure, to self, he falls from grace and from Christ. Work is work—merit is merit—grace is grace. You cannot mix them. All the merit is Christ's! Salvation is a large word: it stands for a large blessing. Not for pardon only—not for a regenerate heart only—but for the whole work, from the election of the sinner and the writing of his name in "The Lamb's book of Life." Throughout all his conflicts and wanderings, and fears and sorrows, till he gets safe into his Saviour's presence. And throughout all—"Christ is all." He is your propitiation; He is your righteousness; He is your sanctification; He is your strength; He is your wisdom; He is your comfort; He is your peace; He is your joy; He is your glory; He is your Heaven. The blood which washes is Christ's blood, and it washes clean without our rubbings or our tears. The spirit who regenerates is Christ's spirit. We are to use great pains, to work with the spirit, to obey Him, to walk in Him—but we cannot help Him to re-create a soul. The righteousness is Christ's—Christ is our righteousness and His work wants no eking out.—*J. C. Millar, D.D.*

Jesus! my Lord! in Thee alone
  Is all my hope, is all my plea:
  Thy blood did once for me atone.
By faith Thy righteousness becomes my own,
God sees my soul, I see my God in Thee.

MAY 8.

"Why art thou cast down, oh my soul?"—Ps. xliii. 5.

WE, possibly, think it strange that our pressures and troubles still continue, and rather grow upon us than abate; but we judge not wisely concerning this. Our best course were to turn to Him who smites us, to acknowledge our rebellions and His justice, to view men less, and God more, in our sufferings, and to confess that our provocations exceed all that is come upon us; to fall down humbly before God, and take submissively His chastisement, saying, "Correct me, O Lord, but with judgment." Thus, likewise, in private personal correctings, let us learn to behave ourselves meekly and humbly, as the children of so great and good a Father; whatsoever He inflicts, not to murmur, nor entertain a fretful thought of it. How vain is it! what gain we by struggling and casting up our hand to cast off the rod, but more lashes? Our only way is to kneel and fold under His hands, and kiss His rod, and even while He is smiting us, to be blessing Him, sending up confessions of His righteousness, and goodness, and faithfulness, only entreating for the turning away of His wrath, though it should be with the continuing of our affliction.

Archbishop Leighton.

Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be!
Lead me by Thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me.

MAY 9.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"—ROM. viii. 35.

Is this he that so lately cried out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" that now triumphs; O happy man! "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Yes, it is the same. Pained then with the thoughts of that miserable conjunction with a body of death, and so crying out, Who will deliver? now he hath found a deliverer to do that for him, to whom he is for ever united; and he glories now in his inseparable union, and unalterable love. So vast a difference is there betwixt a Christian, taken in himself, and in Christ! When he views himself in himself, then he is nothing but a poor, miserable, polluted, perishing wretch; but then he looks again, and sees himself in Christ, and there he is rich, and safe, and happy; he triumphs, and he glories in it above all the painted prosperities, and against all the adversities of the world; he lives in Christ content and happy, and laughs at all enemies. The soul by believing cleaves unto God in Christ as he offers himself in the Gospel, and thence is possessed with a sweet and calm persuasion of His love;—"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Archbishop Leighton.

"Love of Christ which passeth knowledge!"
Let me from that well-spring drink;
Fill me, Father, with its "fulness,"
More than I can "ask or think."

MAY 10.

"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst."—MATT. viii. 2.

WHATSOEVER God doeth by His ordinary Providence, or, if our necessity requires, whatsoever He can do by His extraordinary power, I may say, *He will do for me.* Now that He hath given Himself to me, and taken me unto Himself, what will He *not* do for me that He can? and what cannot He do for me that He will? . . . and it is as certain that He *will*, as that He *can*, do all things for me, Himself having by covenant given Himself unto me, and made me His. It follows, therefore, that I am now none of my own, but wholly God's—I am His by creation, and His by redemption, and therefore ought to be His by conversation. But having solemnly by covenant given myself to Him, how doth it behove me to improve myself for Him! My soul is His, my body is His, my gifts are His, whatsoever is mine is His—so that I have no more cause to be proud of anything I have or am, than a page hath to be proud of his fine clothes, which are not his, but his master's. Therefore, I am resolved, by His grace, to lay out all for His glory. My understanding shall be His, to know Him, my will His, to choose Him, and all the members of my body shall serve Him.

Bishop Beveridge.

Leave God to order all thy ways,
  And hope in Him whate'er betide;
Thou'lt find Him in the evil days
  Thy all-sufficient strength and guide:
Who trusts on God's unchanging love,
  Builds on the rock that nought can move.

MAY 11.

"Vain man would be wise."—JOB xi. 12.

THE desire of making a religion for himself, instead of submitting to that which God is pleased to reveal to him, appears to have been the prevailing folly of man from the beginning. He presumes to sit in judgment on the propriety of the Divine commands; to make the conformity of the Divine dispensations to his own notions of fitness and expediency the sole criterion of their equity and wisdom; to provide for himself the means of salvation; in short, to act as if he were an independent being, self-created, self-redeemed, self-sanctified. By this false wisdom, the first man lost Paradise; and by pride of a similar kind, thousands of his descendants daily forfeit their title to the Tree of Life. But, since the fall of man. "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint," and if, according to the heathen sage, to "know ourselves be a fundamental maxim of wisdom, how much does it behove us to know and consider this our imperfect state, before we presume to speculate upon religious truths? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;" on which, as a rock, we may build our everlasting hope; which neither the rains, nor the winds, nor the tempests shall be able to overthrow.

Bishop Van Mildert.

We that acquaint ourselves with every zone,
And pass both tropics, and behold both poles;
When we come home, are to ourselves unknown,
And unacquainted still with our own souls.

MAY 12.

"Confess Me before men."—MATT. x. 32.

THEY who imagine and say, that they can serve God as well at home as at church, have not considered what we mean by *Public Worship*. That it is an open and public acknowledgment of God's glorious perfections, and of our dependence upon Him, of His power to help us, of His justice to punish us when we do evil, of His mercy and goodness to pity us. It is owning to all the world that we believe what He has revealed in His holy Word, there read to us; that we expect to be judged by that Word at the great day; that therefore we fear God, and consequently we may expect, that all men with whom we have to do, may trust us as men fearing God's judgments if we do wrong. But this is not all: the sin and evil of neglecting the public worship is very great with respect to ourselves. Christians should consider how apt the best of us are to forget the duty we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves; and that the cares of the world will soon blot out all thoughts of duty. It pleased God, therefore, from the creation, to appoint one day in seven to be kept holy.

Bishop Wilson.

The Sundays of man's life,
  Threaded together on Time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
  Of the eternal, glorious King.
On Sundays heaven's gate stands ope;
  Blessings are plentiful and rife,
    More plentiful than hope.

MAY 13.

"Come unto Me."—MATT. xi. 28.

WHEREFORE came the Son of God into the world, but *to save sinners?* add, if thou wilt, *whereof I am chief;* thou canst say no worse by thyself, than a better man did before thee; who in the right of a sinner, claimeth the benefit of a Saviour. Were it not for our sin, what use were there of a Redeemer? Take comfort to thyself, my son; the greatness of thy sin serves but to magnify the mercy of the Forgiver. To remit the debt of some few farthings, it were small thank; but to strike off the scores of thousands of talents, it is the height of bounty. Thus doth thy God to thee. All sums are equally dischargeable to His munificence. Had we to do with a finite power, we had reason to sink under the burden of our sins: now there is neither more nor less, to that which is infinite: only let thy care be, to lay hold on that infinite mercy which lies open to thee: and as thou art an object fit for mercy—so find thyself, as thou art, a subject meet to receive this mercy, as a penitent believer. Open and enlarge thy bosom to take in this free grace; and close with thy blessed Saviour, and, in Him, possess thyself of remission, peace, and salvation.—*Bishop Hall.*

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

MAY 14.

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things."—MATT. xii. 35.

THE most desirable treasure which a human being can possess, whether he has regard to his own happiness or to those around him, is a good heart. But what constitutes a good heart? The grace of God operating upon it: the mild, gentle, healing spirit of the Gospel, or, to use the language of Scripture, "the unction of the Holy Ghost," mollifying its hardness, and preserving it from corruption. This it is which forms a good heart; and a good heart is a land of Canaan to itself—a land flowing with milk and honey. All the irascible passions are, in their excess, diabolical. They would unparadise the garden of Eden, and turn the cheerful light of heaven into gloomy darkness, like the shadow in the valley of death. There is in the world much natural evil; there are pains and diseases enough to wean the heart from the immoderate love of it; but none of them are productive of wretchedness so great and difficult of cure as the malignant passions of pride, envy, and revenge. These estrange man from man, and convert the haunts of human creatures into dens of foxes and wolves. Cheats, calumniators, robbers, murderers, in all their variety and degrees, are characters naturally flowing from hearts unsoftened, unenlightened, unhallowed by the Spirit of grace.—*Vicesimus Knox.*

O for a heart to praise my God,
  A heart from sin set free,
A heart that's sprinkled with the blood
  So freely shed for me.

MAY 15.

"The wicked shall be turned into hell."—Ps. ix. 17.

GOD, therefore, is angry with sin. Is, then, this proposition at variance with the declaration that God so *loved* the world, as to give His only-begotten Son to die for it? Assuredly not. What God *loved* in us was not our *sin* (Heaven forbid!) but our *nature;* that nature which He had made, and which we had marred by sin. And because He hates sin, and knows the nature and consequences of sin, even death eternal; and because He *loves* our *nature,* which is depraved by sin, and is exposed to the penalty of everlasting perdition by sin; and because being infinitely just, He must punish sin, which He who is infinitely pure must hate, and which He who is infinitely true has declared that He will punish; and because the sins of the world are so heinous, being offences against Him who is infinitely holy; and because they therefore demand a satisfaction infinite in value; and because "without shedding of blood there is no remission;" therefore in His immense love for our nature, He sent His own Son, "God of Gods," to take our nature, and to become our "Emmanuel, God with us, God manifest in the flesh."

Christopher Wordsworth, D.D.

Immortal Love! author of this great frame,
  Sprung from that beauty which can never fade;
How hath man parcell'd out Thy glorious Name,
  And thrown it on that dust which Thou hast made!

MAY 16.

"They go from strength to strength."—Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

NICODEMUS is an encouraging example to those who are seeking the Lord's salvation. He had received some favourable impressions of Jesus, but he was very ignorant, and much under the fear of man. He durst only come by night, and at first, though he heard, he understood not; but He, who opens the eyes of the blind, brought him surely, though gently, forward. The next time we hear of him he durst put in a word in behalf of Christ, even in the midst of His enemies (John vii.); and at last he had the courage openly and publicly to assist in preparing the body of his Master for its funeral, at a time when our Lord's more avowed followers had forsaken Him and fled. So true is that, "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord." "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Hope then, my soul, against hope; though thy graces are faint and languid, He who planted them will water His own work, and not suffer them wholly to die. That which was impossible to us is easy to Him, and He has bid us expect seasons of refreshment from His presence. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.—*John Newton.*

On, still onward, mounting nigher
  On the wings of faith to Him!
On, still onward, ever higher,
  Till the mournful earth grows dim.

MAY 17.

"Consider this, ye that forget God."—Ps. i. 22.

MAN can be a witness to the whole host of heaven moving in continual order around him; he can enjoy the grateful vicissitudes of the seasons, and feast upon the various bounties of the earth; he can stand encircled with conveniences and comforts, and yet not advert to the infinitely wise and gracious hand that made and sustains all things. When God would, therefore, impress a nation with any heartfelt awe of His agency and rule over the affairs of men, He is compelled to send forth His judgments on the earth, which, like a glaring comet troubling the sky with its irregular motion and portentous appearance, may arrest the attention, alarm the fears, and lead the thoughts of man to his Maker. When He would recover an individual from that deep forgetfulness of Him, in which he lies by nature, He must change his prosperity into trouble, and his joy into heaviness: must teach him to know himself, and by apprehensions of impending punishment awaken the sleeper into sensibility. Still, even after these severe monitors have performed their office, and set before man his adorable Creator, the remembrance of Him, alas! is apt to pass away like that of a guest which tarries but a day.—*Henry Venn.*

In God's furnace are His people tried:
  Thrice happy they who to the end endure:
But who the fiery trial may abide?
  Who from the crucible come forth so pure,
That He whose eyes of flame look through the whole,
  May see His perfect image in the soul?

MAY 18.

"Sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints."—1 Cor. i. 2.

The followers of Christ have the most honourable appellations assigned them in the Word of God. They are called the excellent of the earth—lights in the world—a chosen generation—a royal priesthood—a holy nation—a peculiar people. They are likened to a well-watered garden—to a fountain of waters—to a lily among thorns—to the palm tree, and to the cedar in Lebanon. They are related to God as His habitation and temple—His flock—His jewels and treasure—His beloved—His friends and children—His heritage and portion. But the light in which they are represented in the text exhibits them in their highest dignity, viz., as subjects of the appropriate operations of all the Persons of the Sacred Trinity. They are called, saved, sanctified; called by the Father, saved in the Son, and sanctified by the Spirit. How high and awfully grand are the destinies of a holy soul! Known to the Ancient of days before all time, and loved with an everlasting love, he is brought through every danger in this world to the enjoyment of eternal glory!—*Henry Martyn.*

The saints above are stars in Heaven—
  What are the saints on earth?
Like trees they stand whom God has given
  Our Eden's happy birth.
Faith is their fix'd unswerving root,
  Hope their unfading flower,
Fair deeds of charity their fruit,
  The glory of their bower.

MAY 19.

"Hear ye Him."—MATT. xvii. 5.

THEY who truly hear the blessed Son of God have Him constantly in their thoughts, and dread to commit any action which they know to be contrary to His express command. They love Him "because He first loved them," and feel assured that the greatest earthly happiness—that "peace of God which passeth all understanding"—is to fit themselves by a life of piety and holiness for an inheritance in that kingdom which will never end. No corroding cares, no fruitless anxieties, no unquiet thoughts, disturb their minds who have brought every unhallowed feeling into subjection, and have gained a complete victory over the world with all its fascinating enjoyments. Their treasure is in heaven, and where their treasure is, there will their hearts be also. . . . They feel the blessed influence of the Spirit upon their hearts in their daily approach to the throne of grace, and they acknowledge with gratitude their love to the Son of God for all the mercies which He has procured for them. What happiness then can be compared to theirs, who have God for their friend, and whose hopes centre "where alone true joys are to be found?"—*Dean Alford.*

Those who, in humble and holy fear,
With childlike faith and love,
Have served the Lord as their Master here,
Shall praise their Lord above.

MAY 20.

"Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."—
MATT. xviii. 26.

THE object of the parable from which the text is taken, is not only to enforce the duty of cultivating a placable disposition, but a disposition *constantly* placable, always ready to forgive the offences of our brother, however frequently he may repeat those offences. Yet this will to many people appear a hard saying, and will not agree with those high-spirited passions, and that keen sense of injuries, which too generally prevail, and which, instead of forgiving repeated offences, will listen to no entreaties even for a single one. But are you then content that your heavenly Father should deal out the same measure to you that you mete to your brother? Are you content that one single offence should exclude you for ever from the arms of His mercy? Are you not every day heaping up sin? do not you stand in as much need of daily forgiveness as you do of your daily bread? and do you think it an *excess* of indulgence, and over-strained degree of compassion, that your Saviour should pardon you "seven times a day?"

Bishop Porteus.

Look thou with pity on a brother's fall,
  But dwell not with stern anger on his fault:
The grace of God alone holds thee, holds all;
  Were that withdrawn, thou too would'st swerve and halt.

MAY 21.

"Come and follow Me."—MATT. xix. 21.

OUR principal and common enemies, against whom we must all jointly fight, are the devil, the world, and the flesh. The devil is strong and subtle, "a roaring lion." So soon as we profess to be Christ's soldiers, as a malicious enemy he invadeth us. "My son, if thou wilt come into the service of God, stand fast in righteousness and fear; and arm thy soul to temptation." Christ Himself was tempted immediately after He was baptized. The devil's ways of assault are these. He persuadeth to evil; he hinders that which is good; he tempts and overcomes even the most perfect, as he did Adam; the strongest, as he did Samson; the wisest, as he did Solomon. No perfection, no strength, no wisdom, ought to free us of this care. We need to pray continually, "Lead us not into temptation." "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Resist him in faith, in prayer, and in the word. "Be crucified unto the world." It is a great victory to overcome the devil, a greater to overcome the world, and the greatest of all, to overcome thyself. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." Let us so strive that we may overcome!—*Archbishop Sandys.*

The Son of God goes forth to war,
  A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streaming far—
  Who follows in His train?
Who best can drink his cup of woe,
  Triumphant over pain;
Who patient bears his cross below—
  He follows in His train.

MAY 22.

"Yet helpeth He the poor out of misery, and maketh Him households like a flock of sheep."—Ps. cvii. 41.

We often tell you, brethren, that there may be many an unexpected affliction and sorrow awaiting you in the future; we may tell you now that there may be, too, in that future, many unlooked-for joys and honours awaiting you. These things, like all others, are in the hands of a sovereign God, and in His wise and holy sovereignty, He often pours them out abundantly when they are the least expected. He delights in noticing those whom others pass over, in putting honour on those whom the world despises, in lifting on high those who are thinking of nothing else but humbling themselves and lying low. Who could have anticipated His designs towards Mary at Nazareth, or towards David among his sheepfolds at Bethlehem, or towards Peter, and James, and John, in their fishing-boats on the lake of Galilee? He may have designs, if not as glorious, yet as unlooked for and gracious towards some of us. There may be thoughts of peace, thoughts of kindness and love in His heart towards us, of which now we have not an idea, and shall not have until His intended mercies are made ours.—*C. Bradley.*

Deep in unfathomable mines
  Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
  And works His sovereign will.
His purposes will ripen fast,
  Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
  But sweet will be the flower.

MAY 23.

"Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."—1 COR. vi. 20.

GOD asks your heart; give it Him; it is His own. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." Oh, the spirits of the just want you; and the holy angels want you; and the Father, and the Son; all but the devil and ruined souls want you, to leave off defrauding the Almighty, and to give Him *His own.* I must give God the body, I must give God the soul. I give Him the body, if I clothe the tongue with praises—if I turn away mine ear from the scoffer, and keep under every appetite, and wrestle with every lust. And I give God the soul, when the understanding is reverently turned on the investigations of celestial truth; when the will is reduced to meek compliance with the divine will; and when all the affections move so harmoniously with the Lord's that they fasten on the objects which occupy His. This it is to give God His own. O God! "all things come of Thee." The will to present ourselves must come of Thee. Grant that will unto all of us, that we may consecrate unreservedly everything to Thy service, and yet humbly confess that of *Thine own* alone do we give Thee!—*Canon Melvill.*

God, the Blessed Three in One,
Dwell within my heart alone;
Thou dost give Thyself to me,
May I give myself to Thee!

MAY 24.

"I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart."—Ps. cxix. 32.

WHILE others are seeking to enlarge their barns, their lands, or estates, or titles; kings to enlarge their territories or authority, to encroach on neighbouring kingdoms, instead of all such enlargements, this is David's great desire—an enlarged heart to run the way of God's commandments. Oh! the blessed choice of that soul that is still seeking more love to God, more affection and more ability to do Him service; though there can be really no accession of gain to Him by our services, yet He is pleased so to account with us as if there were. Therefore we may urge this: "Lord, give more, and receive more; I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart. The enlargement of the heart compriseth the enlightening of the understanding. There arises a clearer light there to discern spiritual things in a more spiritual manner; to see the vast difference betwixt the vain things the world goes after, and the true, solid delight that is in the way of God's commandments—to have enlarged apprehensions of God, His excellency, and greatness, and goodness. Let praise be ascribed to the Lord, because He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever!—*Archbishop Leighton.*

O Thou who keep'st the key of love,
Open Thy fount, eternal Dove,
  And overflow this heart of mine;
Enlarging as it fills with Thee,
Till in one blaze of charity
  Care and remorse are lost, like motes in light divine.

MAY 25.

"When ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ."—1 COR. viii. 12.

"THE communion of saints" was the peculiar feature of primitive Christianity, and has continued from the earliest times of the Church to form an article of her faith;—want of Christian self-denial presents the main hindrance to this "keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." But, admitting that some of the brethren are "weak in the faith," we are not to "please ourselves" in compelling them to adopt our views; but rather to "receive them, and bear their infirmities." Accursed be that charity that is preserved by "the shipwreck of faith!" But though Scriptural truth must never be denied, there are times when it may be forborne. The Apostle "knew and was persuaded of the Lord Jesus, that there was nothing unclean of itself;" yet he would rather allow even the misconception of conscience until clearer light should be given, than endanger the unity of the Church. Wherever, therefore, in the judgment of Christian charity we discover those "that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," we must be ready to give them our very hearts, and to welcome them with brotherly love, as those whom, with all their infirmities, Jesus "is not ashamed to call His brethren."—*C. Bridges.*

'Tis a pleasant thing to see
Brethren in the Lord agree:
Children of a God of love
Live as they shall live above;
Acting each a Christian part,
One in lip, and one in heart.

MAY 26.

"I prayed to the God of heaven."—NEH. ii. 4.

WHEN Nehemiah perceived the king's good inclination towards him and his suit, before he would declare his petition, he turned him unto "the God of heaven," and prayed Him that He would guide his tongue, and move the king's heart. A worthy example for all Christians to follow. He goeth not to any great man, to desire him to speak for him; but turneth him to "the God of heaven," as the chiefest governor of all goodness, who setteth up rulers, and putteth down kings, and is King of kings, and prayeth Him to prosper his suit. This prayer was not so much in speaking or kneeling, but a lifting up of his mind towards God. Hannah made a like prayer when she poured out her sorrow before the Lord, moving her lips, but not speaking a word. For it happens often that in great sorrow a man cannot let a tear fall, the heart being oppressed with grief, and yet he, at another time, will weep tenderly. It is the praying and crying of the heart that God is so much delighted with. Let no man, then, excuse himself, and say he cannot pray, except he were in the church, or in his chamber alone; for in all places he may lift up his mind to God, as Nehemiah did here. Let us also learn to begin all our doings with prayer unto the Lord.—*Bishop Pilkington.*

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
  Utter'd, or unexpress'd,
The motion of a hidden fire
  That trembles in the breast.

MAY 27.

"The kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
—MATT. xxv. 34.

IT is not with truth as with flowers, which we smell at for an hour or two, and so throw them away. But for necessary truths, they will not die in your hands. They are not like flowers, but like gems, precious stones, that keep a lustre from year to year; they are always shining and bright. You may wear them while you live and not be weary of them. There is a glorious life for believers; but it is now hidden like the sap in the root in winter-time. It is hidden in Christ, who is their glorified Head already. If you will ask a question, ask the sun if ever it were without its beams; and ask the fountain if ever it were without its streams. As the sun was never without its beams, nor the fountain without its streams, so God was never without His Son. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," both coexistent and eternal. The Person offered in sacrifice was God as well as man. This is a ground whereupon a believer may challenge Satan to say his worst and do his worst. Let him aggravate the height of God's displeasure, and the height and depth and length and breadth of my sins. Against all this I oppose the infinite satisfaction of Christ, a proportionable satisfaction—God answering God.—*John Arrowsmith.*

How surely 'stablished is Thy throne,
  Which shall no change or period see,
For Thou, O Lord, and Thou alone,
  Art God from all eternity.

MAY 28.

"A God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful."—NEH. ix. 17.

WE do not more desire to be blessed than God does to hear us importune for blessing; and He weighs every sigh, and bottles up every tear, and records every prayer, and looks through the cloud with delight to see us upon our knees, and when He sees His time, His light breaks through it, and shines upon us. Only we must not make our accounts for God according to the course of the sun, but the measures of eternity. He measures us by our needs, and we must not measure Him by our impatience. "God is not slack, as some men count slackness," saith the Apostle; and we find it so, when we have waited long. All the elapsed time is no part of the tediousness; the trouble of it is passed with itself; and for the future, we know not how little it may be; for aught we know, we are already entered into the cloud that brings the blessing. However, pray till it comes; for we shall never miss to receive our desire, if it be holy, or innocent, and safe; or else we are sure of a great reward of our prayers.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

Oh! that I might so believe,
Stedfastly to Jesus cleave;
Only on His love rely,
Smile at the destroyer nigh:—
Free from sin and servile fear,
Have my Saviour ever near;
All His care rejoice to prove,
All His paradise of love!

MAY 29.

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted."—ISA. liii. 7.

JESUS was like the rainbow, which God set in the clouds as a sacrament to confirm a promise and establish a grace. He was half made of the glories of the light, and half of the moisture of a cloud. In His best days, He was but half triumph and half sorrow; He was sent to tell of His Father's mercies, and that God intended to spare us; but appeared not but in the company, or in the retinue of a shower, and of foul weather. But I need not tell you that Jesus, beloved of God, was a suffering person; that which concerns the question most is, that He made for us a covenant of sufferings. His doctrines were such, as expressly and by consequent enjoin and suppose sufferings, and a state of affliction. His very promises were sufferings, His beatitudes were sufferings; His rewards, and His arguments to invite men to follow Him, were only taken from sufferings in this life, and the reward of those sufferings hereafter.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

Thus everywhere we find our suffering God;
And where He trod
May set our steps: the cross on Calvary,
Uplifted high,
Beams on the martyr host a beacon light
In open fight.

MAY 30.

"He is not here, for He is risen."—MATT. xxviii. 6.

PRESENT and future are alike bound up in our belief of our Master's Resurrection and Ascension; and dreary indeed must this present be, and gloomy and clouded that future, if our belief in our risen Lord be uncertain, partial, or precarious. We may think perchance that we are free to speculate, to poise historical credibilities, to boast the liberty of a suspended assent to what seems all too objective and material for the falsely spiritualizing tendencies of the age in which we live. We may think so now; but when the end draws near, when sorrows break us, when age weakens, when darkness begins to close around us, where will all such licence of thought be, and what will it avail us? How shall dust and ashes hope to ascend into the Heaven of heavens, if it cannot feel with all the fulness of conviction that *One* who was bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, has entered into those realms before us, and has taken up our very nature, glorified and beatified, to the Right Hand of the Everlasting Father? . . . May this thought ever teach us to ascend heavenward in soul and spirit now, to learn the path and know the way, that so we may ascend in body, soul, and spirit hereafter.

Bishop Ellicott.

Lord, by Thy saving power
So make us live and die,
That we may stand hereafter
At Thy right hand on high.

MAY 31.

"Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church."—
1 COR. xiv. 12.

IT is a duty high and important, that, by all means in our power, by study, by reflection, by vigilance, and above all, by fervent prayer, we labour, through Divine assistance, ourselves to become a living commentary on the sacred Word. The peace of God would then tranquillize our hearts and minds; and the tranquillity felt within would, infallibly, diffuse itself abroad. There never yet lived a good and happy man who did not communicate from the overflowing of his happiness and goodness. All other means of doing moral good are, at best, uncertain. But in this course there can be neither deception nor disappointment; there is a moral certainty of benefiting others in addition to the home-felt happiness of improving ourselves. The Scriptures, then, in the first instance, and as the foundation of all genuine zeal for the spiritual welfare of our brethren, are to be esteemed and valued as our personal concern. . . . Our Church has provided a clear, exact, and most instructive commentary on this subject in the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent. May we so "hear, read, mark, and inwardly digest," that we may "embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life."—*Bishop Jebb.*

Would'st thou be wise, and know the Lord?
  Would'st thou believe aright?
Make the blest volume of His Word
  Thy rule, thy guide, thy light.

JUNE 1.

"Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord."—
Hos. vi. 3.

THIS is the way, beloved, in which we may find our Saviour, even Jesus Christ, the high priest of all our offerings, the defender and helper of our weakness. By Him we look up to the highest heavens, and behold as in a glass His spotless and most excellent visage. By Him are the eyes of our hearts opened; by Him our foolish and darkened understanding rejoiceth to behold His wonderful light. By Him would God have us to taste the knowledge of immortality, "who being the brightness of His glory, is by so much greater than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." For so it is written, "Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire." But to His Son thus saith the Lord, "Thou art My Son, to-day have I begotten Thee." "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession." And again, He saith unto Him, "Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." But who are His enemies? Even the wicked, and such who oppose their wills to the will of God.

St. Clement.

Jesus, our Lord! to Thee we call,
Thou art our life, our hope, our all;
And we have nowhere else to flee,
No sanctuary, Lord, but Thee.

JUNE 2.

"How can Satan cast out Satan?"—MARK iii. 23.

SATAN would not have a man suffer a single trouble all his life long, if he might have his way. He would give him the thing his heart is set upon. He would work in with his ambition. He would pamper his lust and his pride. But God has better things in reserve for His children; and they must be brought to desire them and seek them: and this will be through the wreck and sacrifice of all that the heart holds dear. The Christian prays for fuller manifestations of Christ's power and glory, and love to him: but he is often not aware, that this is, in truth, praying to be brought into the furnace. Yet, when brought thither, it is one of the worst parts of the trial, that the Christian often thinks himself, for a time at least, abandoned. Job thought so. But while he looked on himself as an outcast, the Infinite Spirit and the wicked spirit were holding a dialogue on his case! He was more an object of notice and interest than the largest armies that were ever assembled, and the mightiest revolutions that ever shook the world, considered merely in their temporal consequences. Let the Christian be deeply concerned to honour his Master before such observers!—*R. Cecil.*

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
  But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning Providence
  He hides a smiling face.

JUNE 3.

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."
—JOHN xiii. 7.

TROUBLE or difficulty befalling us after any particular step, is not, of itself, an argument that the step was wrong. A storm overtook the disciples in the ship; but this was no proof that they had done wrong to go on board. Difficulties are no ground of presumption against us, when we did not run into them in following our own will: yet the Israelites were with difficulty convinced that they were in the path of duty, when they found themselves shut in by the Red Sea. We must remember that we are but short-sighted creatures. We are like an unskilful chess-player, who takes the next piece, while a skilful one looks further. He who sees the end from the beginning, will often appoint us a most inexplicable way to walk in. Joseph was put into the pit and the dungeon; but this was the way which led to the throne. We often want the light of to-morrow, but it will not come till to-morrow. And then a slight turn, perhaps, will throw such light on our path, that we shall be astonished we saw not our way before.—*R. Cecil.*

O Lord, how happy should we be
If we could cast our care on Thee;
  If we from self could rest,
And feel at heart that One above,
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
  Is working for the best.

JUNE 4.

"Be not Thou far from me."—Ps. xxii. 19.

REMEMBER that there is in dying, that which to all grave thinkers ever seems above measure dreary and appalling—its characteristic of utter loneliness and isolation. Hand in hand we go through life, sustained and sustaining: friends may be with us and around us even to the last; tender ministries may smooth the pillow of our death-beds; warm tears may fall on foreheads growing colder and colder with the damps of death—but when the last is verily come, we are, and we must be, *alone.* There is no mortal companion along the valley of the shadow of death. . . . But more than all, O bethink you of the dreadful nature of death when it comes upon you with sins—often deadly sins—either unrepented of, or, perhaps, yet flagrant in your soul. . . . To pass into the unclothed state is awful;—to pass into it in loneliness and solitude is appalling;—but to pass into it with a soul and spirit bearing scarlet traces of mortal sin . . . is the most truly dreadful of all the dread aspects which it is possible for death to assume. May God in mercy give us His grace, that whether our years may be many or few, we may all be brought daily nearer to Him.—*Bishop Ellicott.*

Alone the silent pathway must be trod
  Through that drear spot,
For I must die alone—O then, my God,
  Forsake me not.

JUNE 5.

"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing."—2 COR. iii. 5.

A GOOD thought is the lowest strain of piety, but the first step to grace; yet we see it is higher than nature can rise unto. How is a natural understanding towering, and pleasing itself in the ornaments and riches of its own notions! yet represented by the Spirit as "poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked." Rev. iii. 17. Come to Nicodemus with a Gospel mystery, make it out to him by the most obvious similitudes in nature, yet how is that great doctor void of a heart to perceive, and an ear to hear! Instead of understanding, he will reply, "How can these things be?" and whosoever searches into the great things of the Gospel, by the bare strength of reason, he will find that, like Nicodemus, he comes to Christ in the dark. Wherefore, if in the judgment of the Spirit of Truth, the best of human knowledge, when it ventures upon the things of God, is no more than weakness; then let it deplore its impotence, and not wonder that it is unable, of itself, to perceive the great depths of the Gospel. . . . 'Tis God's nature to dwell in light, but it is our weakness that makes that light inaccessible; as the fruit that grows upon the top branches, is the fairest and sweetest, if we could but reach it.

Robert South, D.D.

However deep be the mysterious word,
However dark, faith disbelieves it not:
Where reason would examine, faith obeys,
And "It is written," answers every doubt.

JUNE 6.

"Troubled on every side, yet not distressed."—2 COR. iv. 8.

WHEN God is in all our thoughts, we may be poor even to destitution; we may be borne to the dust by contempt and ignominy; fallen in man's esteem, we may have become objects of his scorn. Yet "shall not our heart be afraid." The Patriarch's submission will fill our hearts, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." We know that "the disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." Following the steps of the blessed Jesus, we no longer marvel that we are called to bear our cross; we have been taught that such is the appointed condition upon which His disciples hope to follow Him to His glory. The Apostle's language, therefore, speaks the steady courage of a faithful soul—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair." Almighty God, who despiseth not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful, give thus His grace, whereby we derive strength to bear up under our troubles, and patiently to await their removal. To Him, after the example of our Divine Master, we have carried our sorrows; and He has strengthened us by His Spirit, as He strengthened by His Angel the Son in whom He was well pleased.—*J. J. James.*

From darkness, here, and dreariness,
We ask not full repose;
Only be Thou at hand, to bless
Our trial hour of woes.

JUNE 7.

"He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."—
2 COR. v. 21.

How can we reflect upon this event without extreme displeasure against, and hearty detestation of, our sins? those sins which indeed did bring such tortures and such disgraces upon our blessed Redeemer? . . . They were indeed the traitors which, by the hands of Judas, delivered Him up. "He that knew no sin, was made sin for us," that is, was accused, was condemned, was executed as a sinner for us. Our sins were they that cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," with clamours more loud and importunate than did all the Jewish rabble. "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." It was they, which by the hands of the fierce soldiers, and of the rude populace, as by senseless engines, did buffet and scourge Him; they by thorns and nails did pierce His flesh, and rend His sacred body. Upon them therefore it is most just and fit that we should turn our hatred, and discharge our indignation.—*Isaac Barrow, D.D.*

My sin! my sin! O God! my sin!
What power shall peace and pardon win?
What shall blot out the scarlet stain
That doth upon my soul remain?
What shall for me with Mercy plead—
For me with Justice intercede—
Break these sad chains, and set me free?
Miserere Domine!

JUNE 8.

"She is more precious than rubies."—PROV. iii. 15.

PURE religion is a beam of the Father of lights; it is a drop of that eternal fountain of goodness and holiness, the breath of the power of God, a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty, the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His goodness, more beautiful than the sun, and above all the orders of the stars. What is spoken of the eternal Son of God may, in a sense, be truly affirmed of religion in the abstract, that "offspring or branch of heaven." That it is "the effulgency, or beaming forth, of divine glory," for there is more of the divine glory and beauty shining forth in one godly soul than in all things in the world beside. The glorious light of the sun is but a death shadow of the divine light, not to be compared with the beauty of holiness. . . . Mighty strivings, yea, and wars there have been about the "Prince of Peace." Oh! that men would dispute this controversy with works, and not with words, much less with blows! Religion is of an eminent pedigree, of a noble descent; you may find her name in the register of heaven, for where God is, there is she. She carries her name in her forehead; the divine disposition that she is of, the divine works which she worketh, which no one else can work. The same do bear witness which is she.—*Shaw's Immanuel.*

Blessed Healer! all our burdens lighten;
Give us peace, Thine own sweet peace, we pray;
Keep us near Thee till the morn shall brighten,
And all mists and shadows flee away!

JUNE 9.

"Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee."—JOB xii. 8.

A SERIOUS man hardly ever passes a day, never a week, without meeting some warning to his conscience; without something to call to his mind his situation with respect to his future life. And these warnings, as perhaps was proper, come the thicker upon us the farther we advance in life. The dropping into the grave of our acquaintance, and friends, and relations; what can be better calculated, not to prove, for we do not want the point to be proved, but to possess our hearts with a complete sense and perception of the extreme peril and hourly precariousness of our condition? . . . We have warnings of every kind. Even youth itself is continually warned that there is no reliance to be placed either on strength, or constitution, or early age: that if they count upon life as a thing to be reckoned secure for a considerable number of years, they calculate most falsely. Man is, in every sense, a flower of the field. The flower is liable to be cut down in its bloom and perfection, as well as in its witherings and decays. So is man: and one probable cause of this ordination of providence is, that no one of any age may be so confident of life as to allow himself to transgress God's laws; and that all of every age may live in constant awe of their Maker.

Archdeacon Paley.

Lord, help us to obey Thy call,
That from our sins set free,
When like the grass our bodies fall,
Our souls may spring to Thee.

JUNE 10.

"And when ye stand praying, forgive."—MARK xi. 25.

MERCY is pity; compassion, charity; and it is exercised—first, in a willingness to forgive, wherever we have been offended, instead of persecuting the offender. Yes; though the right may be altogether on our side, nothing short of absolute necessity, in order to preserve ourselves; or absolute duty, in order to prevent future harm to others, should persuade us to inflict punishment upon one who has trespassed against us. . . . Who was ever so hardly dealt with and sinned against as our Redeemer Himself? And did this treatment extinguish his pity for His persecutors? His disciples, indeed, on one occasion, desired to call down fire from heaven; but He restrained their vehemence, and replied, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Nay, when He beheld the very city where He had suffered so much, and was to suffer so much more, "He wept over it,"—wept over the misery which that wickedness had incurred. And with His last breath, He prayed for those who had used Him so despitefully:—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"—*Archbishop Sumner.*

When thou hast the sum of all
Blessings that uncounted fall
Round thy path; the light and love
Waiting on thee from above;
All by boundless mercy brought,
Into judgment entering not;
Thou some faint reply from heaven
Hast, how man should be forgiven.

JUNE 11.

St. Barnabas.

"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost."—ACTS xi. 24.

WE read of Barnabas and Saul's indefatigable industry in travelling up and down, and scattering the light of the Gospel in dark and distant regions: which should teach us to spare no pains to rescue men from ignorance and error, and to bring them to the knowledge and understanding of divine truths, turning them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God; knowing that he that turneth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save his soul alive, and shine as the stars in the kingdom of Heaven. . . . From the contest that happened between St. Paul and St. Barnabas we may learn, that the best men have their failings, that we all here know but in part, and that differences may arise in lesser matters, even among good men; which should make us bear with one another's infirmities, and avoid as much as possible all contention and strife, longing for that happy time when all these imperfections shall be done away, and we shall be all joined together in one fellowship and communion, singing the praises of our Maker to eternity; to which blessed state, God of His infinite mercy bring us all, for the merits of Jesus Christ.

Matthew Hole, D.D.

Oh, bid Thy glorious Gospel run,
And tell the nations of Thy Son!
Of Him who, on th' accursed tree,
Died that their souls might live to Thee.

JUNE 12.

"There is none other commandment greater than these."—
MARK xii. 31.

IT seems excellently well said by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that all justice and righteousness is fulfilled by the performance of these two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength . . . and thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. xxii. 37, &c.) For whoever loves God with all his heart, and with all his strength, and is full of pious thoughts towards Him, will not worship any other God; but yet, according to the command of God, will also worship His angel or messenger, which is the Well-beloved of the Lord God. And whosoever loves his neighbour as himself, whatsoever he wishes may happen to himself, he will wish may happen to him also. But no man will wish ill to himself. Therefore whoever loves his neighbour as himself, will pray for, and do the same good to his neighbour, as he wishes may be done to himself. Wherefore all righteousness is divided into two parts, namely, towards God, and towards men. Whosoever, says the Scripture, loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his strength, and his neighbour as himself, really is just and righteous.

Justin Martyr.

O happiest work below, earnest of joy above,
To sweeten many a cup of woe by deeds of holy love!
Lord, may it be our choice,
This blessed rule to keep,
"Rejoice with them that do rejoice,
And weep with them that weep."

JUNE 13.

"Take ye heed, watch and pray."—MARK xiii. 33.

THOUGH a Christian must live in the world, and must take care of himself, and those that depend upon him, yet still he remembers, that this is not the world he was made for; that he is hastening to another world, which, therefore, he strives to keep his eye upon, lest the hurry or the pleasures of this world should divert him from thinking upon God, who is the fountain of eternal blessedness, and from loving Him with all the powers of his soul. He considers that, let his circumstances here be what they will, he must take thought for hereafter, or be undone for ever; that if his condition be never so hard, he may, in God's good time, see an end of his sorrows; and if he has never so many enjoyments, he must leave them all in a very short time; that therefore it will be no sense to make that one's aim, and choice, and delight, which we know can never make us happy, which has deceived us a thousand times, and which we should utterly despise, if we did but once truly consider the happiness God proposes to us. And why should we not consider it? We have very many reasons to do so, if either the truth of God, the greatness of the reward, or the disappointments of this life, have any weight with us.—*Bishop Wilson.*

Then let a world of shadows go—
It matters not, His people know
  Their treasure still is sure;
'Tis laid up there where nothing fades,
No rust consumes, no thief invades—
  And thus it is secure.

JUNE 14.

"When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, there is lifting up."
—JOB xxii. 29.

TO SEE a Christian mind encountering some great affliction and conquering it: to see his valour in not sinking at the hardest distresses of life, this is a sight which God delights to behold. It were no hard condition to have a trial now and then, with long ease and prosperity between; but to be plied with one affliction at the heels of another; to have them come thronging in multitudes, and of different kinds, this is that which is often the portion of those who are the beloved of God. The consideration which moderates this affliction, is its shortness of duration. Because we willingly forget eternity, therefore this moment seems much in our eyes; but if we could look upon it aright, of how little concernment is it what be our condition here! The rich man in the Gospel talked of many years, but, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee."—*Archbishop Leighton.*

This then must be the med'cine for my woes,
To yield to what my Saviour shall dispose;
To glory in my baseness, to rejoice
In my afflictions; to obey His voice,
As well when threatenings my defects reprove,
As when I cherish'd am with words of love;
To say to Him in every time and place—
Withdraw Thy comforts, so Thou leave Thy grace.

JUNE 15.

"When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold."—
JOB xxiii. 10.

WHAT an interpreter of Scripture is affliction! How many stars in the heaven shine out brightly in the night of sorrow and pain, which were unperceived or overlooked in the garish day of prosperity! What an enlarger of Scripture is any outer or inner event, which stirs the depth of our hearts, which touches us near to the core and centre of our lives! Trouble of spirit, condemnation of conscience, sudden danger, strong temptation, . . . when any of these overtake us, what veils do they take away, that we may see what hitherto we saw not; what new domains of God's word do they bring within our spiritual ken! How do promises, which once fell flat upon our ears, become precious now! . . . How do we see things now with the eye, which before we knew only by the hearing of the ear; which before, men had told us, but now we ourselves have found! . . . So that on these accounts the Scripture is fitted to be our companion, and to do us good all the years of our life.—*Archbishop Trench.*

'Tis mercy all, that Thou hast brought
My soul to seek its peace in Thee,
Yet while I seek, but find Thee not,
No peace that wand'ring soul shall see;
O when shall all my wand'rings end,
And all my steps to Jesus tend?

JUNE 16

"Examine yourselves."—2 COR. xiii. 5.

CONSIDER the necessity for all of us, in respect both of our sins and of our good works, of an exercise like self-examination. This necessity arises from the fact, so distinctly stated in Scripture, that "the heart is deceitful above all things," and that "he that trusteth in his own heart"—in its dictates respecting himself and his own spiritual condition—"is a fool." It has pleased God to illustrate this cardinal truth by two grand examples, one in the Old, and one in the New Testament. It must have been by trust in the subtle evasions and plausible shifts of his own heart, that David, after committing two of the worst crimes of which our nature is capable, so long contrived to keep his conscience quiet; but at length was convicted of the desperate folly of severely condemning in another man the very faults which, in an infinitely aggravated form, he had been palliating and excusing in himself. And it was by trusting in the assurances which his heart gave him of his own strong attachment to his Master, that St. Peter, secure of himself, was betrayed into the weakness and folly of denying Christ.

E. M. Goulburn, D.D.

Tear away my every boast;
  My stubborn mind abase;
Saviour, fix my only trust
  In Thy redeeming grace!
Give me a submissive heart
  From pride and self-dependence free:
Meek Redeemer! now impart
  Thine own humility!

JUNE 17.

"Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne."—Ps. lxxxix. 14.

As we read the sublime lesson of a great and wise God in the wide pages of the external world, we decipher in the moral constitution of man, a testimony no less significant, and even more touching and solemn, of His holiness and righteousness, His love of good, and hatred of iniquity. . . . The loftiest notions of God the Creator lead us on to God the Judge. We cannot rest satisfied with acknowledging the Divine Power, except we also believe it to be the awful enemy of sin and wickedness. "All living things wait upon Him, that He may give them their meat in due season; if He hide His face, they are troubled; if He take away their breath, they return to the dust." And we cannot but recognize in the Lord of life and death, the guardian of that separation of sin and holiness to which our reason points. When in our moments of inward brightness we consider Him, Who "clothes Himself with light as with a garment," we are solemnly impressed with the Psalmist's persuasion that "justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne, mercy and truth go before His face."

William Whewell, D.D.

Sweep from this heart, Thy sacred shrine,
  Earth's mouldering and unhallow'd fires;
Let all its incense, Lord, be Thine,
  Thine all its feelings, its desires:
What traitor sin would dare to steal
Its love from Him who bade it feel?

JUNE 18.

"Justified by the faith of Christ, not by works of the law."—
GAL. ii. 16.

JUDGED by the criterion of the highest motive, nothing can be more miserably defective than the best righteousness of the best man. It flows indeed from the Holy Spirit within him; but even the influences of the Spirit derive an admixture of infirmity from flowing through the tainted channels of the human will and affections. It was not so with the Lord Jesus. The nature which He took of the pure Virgin was subject to all the physical, but none of the moral, infirmities of our nature. His heart beat always true to God's glory and man's salvation; —a magnetic needle ever pointing to that great pole, not shaken even for a moment from its steadfastness by the vacillation of lower and less perfect motives. And His singleness of aim, His piety and benevolence of conduct is ours—God be praised!—not only to copy, but also to appropriate. Take it, Christian; it is thine. Delight in it, as God delights in it, and thou shalt be agreed with God, and shalt stand before Him at the last day in the white robe, pure as driven snow; not having thine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

E. M. Goulburn, D.D.

I look'd to Jesus, and I found
In Him my radiant Sun;
So in the Light of light I live,
And glory is begun.

JUNE 19.

"His eyes are upon the ways of man."—JOB xxxiv. 21.

LET this thought often return, that God is Omnipresent, filling every place; and say with David, "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there." Let everything you see represent to your spirit the presence, the excellency, and the power of God; and let your conversation with the creatures lead you unto the Creator; for so shall your actions be done more frequently with an actual eye to God's presence, by your often seeing Him in the glass of the creation. Let us, also, remember that God is in us, and that we are in Him; we are His workmanship, let us not deface it: we are in His presence, let us not pollute it by unholy and impure actions.—He walks as in the presence of God that converses with Him in frequent prayer, and frequent communion; that runs to Him in all his necessities; that asks counsel of Him in all his doubtings; that opens all his wants to Him; that weeps before Him for his sins; that asks remedy and support for his weakness; that fears Him as a Judge, reverences Him as a Lord, obeys Him as a Father, and loves him as a Saviour.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

O Thou that sitt'st in Heaven, and seest
  My deeds without, my thoughts within—
Be Thou my Prince, be Thou my Priest,
  Command my soul, and cure my sin:
How bitter my afflictions be
I care not, so I rise to Thee.

JUNE 20.

"These wait all upon Thee: that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season."—Ps. civ. 27.

WE talk of God as if we thought Him to be the governor of the world, and the dispenser of all events that happen to mankind; but yet, alas! how few of us are there that dare repose any confidence in Him! Our care about our affairs is as great as if all things came to pass by chance, or fate, or the will of man. We are indeed apt enough to trust God with our souls, not caring how little thought we take about them ourselves; but as for worldly concerns, we will not trust Him any farther than as we see we have the means of accomplishing our designs in our own hands. But this is a base, unthankful, unworthy practice; for shame's sake let us quit it; let us shake off this dull, earthly, stupid humour; let us cast our eyes up to the Author and Preserver of our beings, and, like men, make use of the reason and understanding that He has given us, not living altogether by sense, as the brute beasts do, but exercising faith in the goodness and power of God. "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy."—*Archbishop Sharp.*

One there lives, whose guardian eye
Guides our humble destiny;
One there lives, who, Lord of all,
Keeps our feathers lest they fall;
Pass we blithely, then, the time,
Fearless of the snare and lime,
Free from doubt, and faithless sorrow;
God provideth for the morrow!

JUNE 21.

"Here shall thy proud waves be stayed."—JOB xxxviii. 11.

HAVE not the Saints in all ages been content to convey pure religion to posterity in streams of their own blood? Well, hold fast by this conclusion, that God can limit and bind up the most violent wrath of man, that though it swells it will not break forth. The stiffest heart, as the current of the most impetuous river, is in His hand to appoint its channels, and turn it as He pleaseth. Yea, it is He that hath shut up the very sea with bars and doors, and said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." To see the surges of a rough sea come in towards the shore, a man would think that they were hastening to swallow up the land; but they know their limits, and are beaten back into foam. Though the waves thereof were themselves as angry at their restraint, yet the small sand is a check to the great sea. "Yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it." (Jer. v. 23.) The sum is this: What God permits His Church's enemies to do, is for His own further glory; and reserving this, there is not any wrath of man so great but He will either sweetly calm it, or strongly restrain it.—*Archbishop Leighton.*

The swelling flood, and raging flame,
  Hear and obey His word;
Then let us triumph in His Name,
  Our Saviour is the Lord.

JUNE 22.

"Let us do good unto all men."—GAL. vi. 10.

IN proportion as you have imbibed the spirit of the Gospel, all evil jealous passions will give way to mutual love and good will; you will rejoice when others are benefited; and you will labour to benefit them yourselves. Nor is it by those of large fortune or plentiful means alone that the blessed quality of mercy may be shown. You practise it when you sit by a neighbour's sick bed and cool his feverish tongue; you practise it when you comfort the widow in her affliction; you practise it when you share your humblest pittance with those who are worse provided —whenever, in short, you do the least and lowest office of kindness, from a sense that the creatures of God and servants of your Redeemer ought not to pine for anything which you can give them. God and your Redeemer will receive the charity as done to themselves. Jesus blessed the widow's mite; and declared to His disciples, that whosoever should give them "a cup of water to drink in His name, and because they belonged to Christ, he should not lose his reward."

Archbishop Sumner.

Since the loving Lord
Commanded us to love them for His sake—
Even for His sake, and for His sacred word,
Which in His last bequest He to us spake—
We should them love, and with their needs partake.
Knowing that whatsoe'er to them we give,
We give to Him, by whom we all do live.

JUNE 23.

"I know whom I have believed."—2 Tim. i. 12.

THE Christian who lives in the habitual contemplation of his Saviour, and in daily communion with Him, sometimes in prayer, sometimes in the spiritual participation of His Body and Blood, setting the Lord always before him, identifying his interests, and, as far as possible, his personal character with those of his Master, will find the bonds of that mystical union strengthened and drawn more close, in proportion as all earthly ties are weakened and dissolved. He will have a distinct and vivid perception of Christ, while every object of worldly interest and desire is fading from his view; and he will experience the light of His countenance to be more intense and vivifying, in proportion as the shadow of the dark mountains intercepts the waning brightness of departing day. And at the last, when the portals of the eternal world are opening to receive his spirit, which still, perhaps, shrinks under the last pressure of natural infirmity, a voice will be heard by the dying spirit, and echoed in accents of comfort and assurance to those who stand around his bed of death—"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."—*Bishop Blomfield.*

Child of heaven by Me restored,
Love thy Saviour, serve thy Lord,
Seal'd with that mysterious Name,
Bear the cross, and scorn the shame;
Then like Me, thy conflict o'er,
Thou shalt rise to sleep no more—
Partner of My purchased throne,
One in joy—in glory one!

JUNE 24.

"He that cometh after me is mightier than I."—MATT. iii. 11.

THE law of Moses and the prophets existed in force, until John was born, who baptized Christ; and he is the end of the old law. With him also began the preaching of the Gospel, and he was born before the coming of Christ, as the day-star in the morning riseth before the sun. So shone John in holy preaching before the face of our Saviour, and was therein His harbinger, and with his baptism showed that the baptism of Christ was at hand. Christ Himself said of him, that there was not a greater man than he among the sons of women. Yet in this comparison Christ is not reckoned, who was born of a pure virgin. John wrote no book himself; but deeds are recorded in the Gospels of our Lord, whom he baptized, and whose forerunner he was both in life and death. His fame is now spread abroad throughout all Christendom, and wheresoever the Gospel or word of God doth come.—*St. Ælfric.*

"Almighty God, make us so to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching, and, after his example, constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Where is the lore the Baptist taught,
  The soul unswerving and the fearless tongue,
The much enduring wisdom, sought
  By lonely prayer the haunted rocks among—
Who counts it gain
  His light should wane,
So the whole world to Jesus throng?

JUNE 25.

"The prosperity of fools shall destroy them."—PROV. i. 32.

LET a man seriously consider upon what weak hinges his prosperity hangs. Perhaps the falling of an accident, the misplacing of a circumstance, may determine all his fortunes for ever. Or perhaps his whole interest, his possessions, and his hopes too, may live by the breath of another, who may breathe his last tomorrow. How quickly is the sun overcast, and how often does he set in a cloud, and that cloud break in a storm! He that well considers this, will account it a surer livelihood to depend upon the sweat of his own brow, than on the favour of another man's. Or, does he, who was once pure and ignorant, find his notions or manners improved, because perhaps his friend or father died, and left him rich? Or does he understand anything at all the more for keeping a bailiff or a steward? As great and good a landlord as he may be, he may for all this have an empty room to let. Let us then solicit God not so much for temporal enjoyment as for a heart that may fit us for it, and that He will be the *chooser* as well as giver of our portion in this world.—*Robert South, D.D.*

Whate'er events betide,
  Thy will they all perform;
Safe in Thy breast my head I hide,
  Nor fear the coming storm.

JUNE 26.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence."—PROV. iv. 23.

SOUND thy heart to the bottom, and try it well to be thoroughly satisfied of thy sincerity. Let no day pass without an account taken from thy life, and be sure to observe very diligently what ground you get, or lose; what alteration appears in your temper, behaviour, affections, desires; what resemblance to, or degeneracy from God: how near approaches you make, or to what distance you are cast, a distance and approach to be measured, not by extension and space, but by actions and dispositions. Above all other subjects, study your own self. Govern your passions, manage your actions with prudence, and where false steps have been made, correct them for the future. Let nothing be allowed to grow headstrong and disorderly, but bring all under discipline. Lay all your faults before your own eyes, and pass sentence upon yourself as you would do upon any other, for whom no partiality hath biassed your judgment. Then, open your grief before God, show Him the troubles of a wounded conscience, and the malice of him who lies in wait for your soul.—*St. Bernard.*

Help us to search within
The motives of each day,
To cast out every bosom sin,
To watch as well as pray.

JUNE 27.

"Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God."—EPH. iv. 30.

No person will continue at one certain point of wickedness; either he must reform and be growing better, or he will still grow more vicious and depraved while God suffers him to live. The reason is this:—We none of us act purely of ourselves, but all mankind are governed either by the Spirit of God, or by the power of the Devil. Whichever of these two directs us, they will not suffer us to be idle. So long as the Spirit of God continues to rule in our hearts, we shall go from "strength to strength," till we become perfect, and out of the power of hell to touch us; and if we "grieve" the Holy Spirit, and force Him away, then the spirit of darkness will not suffer us to be idle, but will find work enough to bring us to himself. The more a man sins, the less capable he still makes himself of seeing what will be the end of his ways; and the motions and workings of God's Spirit have still less power upon him, till God quite forsakes him.—As then we pray to be delivered from the crafts and assaults of the devil, we are bound to take great heed unto our ways, that we grieve not the good Spirit of God.—*Bishop Wilson.*

Holy Spirit, dwell with me!
I myself would holy be;
Separate from sin, I would
Choose and cherish all things good:
And whatever I can be,
Give to Him who gave me Thee!

JUNE 28.

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God."—EPH. v. 20.

WE are to give thanks to God; that is, to Him unto whom we are obliged, not for some small and inconsiderable trifles, but all good things; whatever is necessary for our sustenance, convenient for our use, pleasant for our enjoyments. To Him, who is the Lord and true owner of all things we partake of; whose air we breathe, whose ground we tread on; whose, wholly, we are ourselves; both our bodies, the work of His hand; and our souls, which were breathed from His mouth. To Him, who hath created a whole world to serve us, a spacious, a beautiful, a stately world for us to inhabit; who hath subjected so fair a territory to our dominion. To Him, who hath inspired us with immortal minds, and impressed upon them perspicuous characters of His own Divine Essence. . . . To Him who vouchsafes to grant us a free access unto, and a constant intercourse, with Himself; and to esteem and style us His friends and children. Is there anything more? Yes. To Him who, to redeem us from misery, and to advance our estate, hath infinitely debased Himself, and eclipsed the brightness of His glorious Majesty—not disdaining to inhabit our frail and mortal nature, and at last, to taste the bitter cup of a most painful death for us; designing thereby to exalt us to a participation of His royal dignity, His Divine nature, His eternal glory and bliss.—*Isaac Barrow.*

Man's life's a book of history;
  The leaves thereof are days;
The letters, mercies closely join'd;
  The title is Thy Praise.

JUNE 29.

St. Peter.

"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."—MATT. xvi. 16.

PETER had been led, by God's assistance, to see that his blessed Master was indeed the long-expected Christ, the Son of the living God. It is not likely, indeed, that the Apostle understood at that time the full import of what he himself confessed. But it was a great point that he had grace to see and to confess his lowly and despised Master to be not only the very Christ or Messiah, but also a divine Person, distinguished from all other men as the Son of the living God. We have to bless God therefore for St. Peter's candid and childlike spirit, by which, under God's teaching, he was enabled to see the truth, and for his manliness and courage in confessing it. We should think of him as "the rock" on which Christ built His Church, with the same grateful and reverent affection with which the Israelites of old reflected on the patriarchs who were the founders of the elder Church. And when we meditate on the wonderful preservation and ever-increasing dimensions of the Church of Christ, and on all the glorious promises made to it, may we be more thankful that it has been opened unto us; more sensible of our own responsibility, and more anxious that it should be opened to others.—*Bishop Trower.*

The pastoral staff, the keys of Heaven,
  To wield awhile in grey-hair'd might,
Then from his cross to spring forgiven,
  And follow Jesus out of sight.

JUNE 30.

"Great is our Lord, and great is His power."—Ps. cxlvii. 5.

Look to your thoughts of Christ. Do you consider Him "as the Lord of Glory?" The Apostle Peter says, "To them that believe He is precious." The word might be rendered, "He is an honour." Reflect then—what was He to St. Paul? Paul had the advantage of high birth, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews;" he had dignity, "a Pharisee;" he had learning, "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel;" he had moral accomplishments, for "as touching the law he was blameless;"—and he adds, "If any man might have confidence in the flesh, I more;" and yet he counted "all things but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord!" Christ Jesus was Paul's treasure, and Paul's honour, and Paul's glory. He considered it an honour to be counted even vile for God and Christ's sake! Ecclesiastical history mentions that a knight of France, when he was led with other martyrs to the place of execution for faith in Christ, was not, like the others, bound with cords—he had been spared that degradation on account of his station in life. But on his way to execution, he cried out, "Give me my chains too; let me be a knight of the same order as my fellow-martyrs." Truly it is an honour to be counted vile for Christ's sake!—*Thomas Manton.*

Christ! whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only light:
Sun of righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shade of night:
Day-spring from on high be near,
Day-star in my heart appear!

JULY 1.

"To be with Christ, which is far better."—PHIL. i. 23.

IT is not true that in order to be good and useful citizens we must cease to be exemplary Christians. On the contrary, it is the steadfast, consistent, courageous servant of Christ, who, upon the whole, passes through life with the greatest credit and comfort, and who, in the end, reaps a rich harvest of golden opinions, as having lived, no less to the advantage of his country and of mankind, than to the honour and advancement of the religion which he professed. To him who can declare of himself, in this sense, that "to live is Christ," no person who believes the Gospel can entertain any doubt that "to die is gain." Perplexed and straitened by trials of extreme and varied sharpness, it is no wonder if St. Paul declared that he had "a desire to depart and to be with Christ," which, says he, "is far better.". . . True it is, that even with the sincere and confirmed Christian, there may be natural feelings and attachments, or occasional misgivings and apprehensions blending themselves with the brightness of his prospects; yet, though he feels unable to *desire* the change, he never doubts that it will be *gain* to him; and the assurance of its being so is the only solid consolation which remains to his friends.—*Bishop Blomfield.*

Beyond earth's changeful fashioning,
Beyond the sweep of death's wide wing,
Beyond the last dark fall of shade,
The Home of endless light is made.

JULY 2.

"There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing."—
PROV. xiii. 7.

RICHES are things whose nature consists in usefulness; abstract that, they become nothing; he that has them is no more concerned in them than he that has them not. It is the art and skill to use affluence wisely and nobly, which makes it wealth, and constitutes him rich that has it; otherwise the chests may be crammed, and the barns full, while the man is miserably poor and beggarly. To dispense our wealth liberally is the best way to preserve it, and to continue master thereof. What we give is not thrown away, but saved from danger; nor can it ever be safe till it is ensured in this way. When we have bestowed it on the poor, then we have lodged it in unquestionable safety, in a place where no rapine, no mishap, no corruption can ever come at it. All our doors and bars, all our forces and guards, all the circumspection and vigilancy we can use, are no defence or security in comparison to this. The poor man's pocket is a bank for our money which can never disappoint or deceive us. All the rich traders in the world may decay or break, but the poor man can never fail, unless God Himself turns bankrupt, for He hath said that "he which giveth to the poor shall not lack."

Isaac Barrow, D.D.

The good I have is from His stores supplied;
  The ill is only what He deems the best;
He for my Friend, I'm rich with nought beside;
  And poor without Him, though of all possest.
Changes may come; I take, or I resign;
Content, while I am His, while He is mine.

JULY 3.

"The way of the slothful man is a hedge of thorns."—
PROV. XV. 19.

FEW men know their own strength, for want of trying it; and upon that account, think themselves unable to do many things, which they have more ability to effect than they have will to attempt. It is idleness that creates impossibilities; the shortest and surest way to prove a work possible, is strenuously to set about it. *Dig*, says the unjust steward, I *cannot:* but why? Did either his legs, or his arms, fail him? No, but labour was a dry kind of livelihood to a man that could get an estate with two or three strokes of his pen. But such excuses will not pass with God, who will allow no man's humour or idleness to be the measure of *possible* or *impossible.* Those very things which upon the obligation of duty are declined by men as impossible, presently become practicable in a case of extreme necessity. The unjust steward would have been brought both to *dig* and to *beg*, rather than starve; if so, why could he not submit to the same hardships rather than cheat and lie? He who can digest any labour rather than die, must refuse no labour rather than *sin.—R. South, D.D.*

What?—pride and sloth; man's worst of foes!
And can such guests invade
Our choicest bliss, the green repose
Of the sweet garden-shade?

JULY 4.

"Think on these things."—PHIL. iv. 8.

YOU recall to your own minds, you bear witness to those who believe not, of that night when Jesus was betrayed, when He endured His agony, of that day when He laid down His life for our sakes. Believe me, most divine as is the wisdom of His preaching, most rich in all the treasures of spiritual knowledge as are His discourses and His parables, yet they cannot be rightly valued, they will not bring forth their proper fruit, unless we do full often recall to our minds the still diviner lesson of His sufferings and death. This it is, which learnt—I do not say perfectly, for who has ever found out all that is contained in it?—but which learnt sincerely, and up to the measure of our faculties, will be better than all the other teaching in the world. This will tell us of life and of death, and of sin and of forgiveness, of judgment and of mercy. This speaks louder than anything else can do, to bid us love one another as Christ has loved us. This sweeps away the fond imaginations in which we wrap ourselves, of our own worthiness, and dignity, and nobleness; of our high-reaching faculties, and steadfast purposes: for it tells us that if One died for all, then were all without Him dead.

Bishop Jebb.

My Jesus, day by day,
Help me to watch and pray,
Beside the tomb wherein my heart Thou'st laid;
Thy bitter death shall be
My constant memory,
My guide at last into death's awful shade.

JULY 5.

"He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."—Ps. xxiv. 5.

It is well, it is grateful, to contemplate the latter days of one gradually sinking to his rest, with every concomitant around—busy in attestation that he has lived a life of honour, of usefulness, and of praise: it is improving to ourselves to witness the repose of a conscience void of offence, unruffled by the reflected images of turbulent passions. It is consolatory to behold the calm serenity which possesses the soul in the peaceful anticipation of a long-waited-for futurity. But that which gives the reality of an eternal impress to the scene, and touches with the alchemy of heaven whatever there may be of earth within, is to hear this very man, with all his unquestioned worthiness—(by whatever scale worth is estimated among men)—to hear him dwelling most upon his unworthiness before God: speaking with heartfelt astonishment of the forbearance of his heavenly Father, and rejoicing—not in the unsullied integrity of his life; not in the approbation of his friends and the world; but rejoicing in this—that Christ Jesus came "to save the lost."

John Brown.

When in dust and ashes to the grave I sink,
While heaven's glory flushes o'er the shelving brink;
On Thy truth relying through that mortal strife,
Lord! receive me, dying, to eternal life.

JULY 6.

"Keep thy tongue from evil."—Ps. xxxiv. 13.

TRY to reckon up the sins of the tongue, only less in number than those of the heart. Think of the profane exclamation, the scoffing speech, the irreverent jest, the cruel slander, the half-hinted calumny, the unkind insinuation, the uncharitable misconstruction; the bitterness, and the wrath, and the malice, and the clamour of evil-speaking; think of the taunt, and the reproach, and the angry retort, and the fierce recrimination, the irony and the sarcasm, those sharp polished sword-wounds of the tongue; think of the deliberate falsehoods, and the half-lies, and the deceitful pretences, and the suppression of truth, and the glaring flatteries, and the smooth, hollow compliments of society; think of the "foolish talking and jesting, that are not convenient," the light, trifling, frivolous conversation that fills up so many of our leisure hours; think of all these evil communications that proceed out of the mouth: remember, too, the times when you kept a criminal silence. And remember, all this evil you have done in the sight of God! in the sight of the All-seeing, Whose "eyes are on the ways of man."—*Bishop Magee.*

Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control
  That o'er thee swell and throng;
They will condense within thy soul,
  And change to purpose strong.

JULY 7.

"He beheld the city, and wept over it."—LUKE xix. 41.

TWICE only is it written in the Gospel, that Jesus wept. Once was for the death of Lazarus whom He loved, and once for the destruction of the city which hated Him: and therein He has taught us the greatness and the depth of that love which we too should bear unto the land of our nativity. It is not because our efforts are unrewarded or our talents unpraised, that we are permitted to shrink from the duty of loving our country or doing it good. So long as we can be useful to the age and generation and country in which we are born, so long must we labour with fidelity in our appointed station. The salvation of his country was "the desire of the heart" and the "prayer of the lips," as it had ever been the labour of the life of the injured Jesus. But the Gentile, as well as the Jew, may sin against his Redeemer and his God. . . . I never meet with one of these monuments of God's indignation and wrath, walking in loneliness through the streets, without turning my mind instinctively to the words and warnings of St. Paul: "If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee."—*Christopher Benson.*

To the earth—
To all mankind a *Saviour* was He sent,
And all He loved with a Redeemer's love;
Yet still, His warmest love, His tenderest care,
His life, His heart, His blessings, and His mournings,
His smiles, His tears, He gave to thee, Jerusalem!

JULY 8.

"I delight to do Thy will."—Ps. xl. 8.

A CHRISTIAN's heart is with the will of God, with the law and commandments of God, and hungereth and thirsteth after strength to fulfil them; and mourneth day and night, desiring God, according to His promises to give him power to fulfil His will with love. The outward deed testifieth what is within us, as we read in John v. 36, "The same works that I do bear witness of me," and John xiii., "Hereby shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another." . . . Fear, therefore, and cry to God for grace, that thou mayest love His laws, and when thou lovest them, cease not till thou hast obtained power of God to fulfil them; so shalt thou be sure that a good reward follow, which reward, not thy deeds but Christ's have purchased for thee. Remember also, that a reward is rather called that which is given freely, than that which is deserved. That which is deserved is called hire or wages. A reward is given freely to proovke unto love. . . . Let us then pray "that we may so faithfully serve God that we fail not to attain His heavenly promises, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord."—*William Tyndall.*

Let wisdom o'er my heart preside
  To lead my steps aright,
And make Thy perfect law my guide,
  Thy service my delight.

JULY 9.

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always."—LUKE xxi. 36.

WHEN thou art tempted or troubled, think upon the remedy that our Saviour saith in His Gospel, "Watch ye and pray ye, that ye enter not into temptation." He saith not, Pray ye that ye be not tempted; for it is good and profitable to good men to be tempted and troubled. To him that is tempted and troubled, God saith, "I am with him in tribulation; I shall deliver him and shall glorify him." Let no man think himself to be holy because he is not tempted, for the holiest and highest in life have the most temptations. How much the higher a hill is, so much is the wind there greater; so, how much higher the life is, so much stronger is the temptation of the enemy. . . . So our Lord suffereth His loved child to be tempted and troubled for a time, and withdraweth some of His solace and full protection, to see what his child will do. . . . Therefore, when we are tempted, let us cry for the help of our Father, as a child cries after the comfort of its mother. . . . Devout prayer of a holy soul is as sweet incense which driveth away all evil savours, and enters up by odour of sweetness into the presence of God.—*John Wickliff.*

Suffer not our feet to stumble,
  Suffer not our steps to slide,
Keep us lowly, keep us humble,
  And be Thou Thyself our Guide!

JULY 10.

"Our exhortation was not of deceit."—1 THESS. ii. 3.

As the devil, when he assumes the form of an angel of light, so is a wicked man, when he goes about to recommend virtue and describe the power of godliness. He is a strange unnatural mixture of the two most disagreeing things in the universe. A man, conscious to himself of secret unrepented guilt, of unmortified passions, and appetites in their full natural power, when his lips go without his heart, his words must turn upon himself and fly in his face; and he is, though otherwise of great abilities and endowments, at the best, but "as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal;" nothing but noise, without any sense of what is spoken. No dissimulation or hypocrisy can come up to the genuine air of sincere piety. For, as there is something in vice and wickedness that makes a discovery of itself, so there is something in sincere religion that cannot be counterfeited. When the mind is strongly impregnated with God and goodness, and the breast warmed with religion, it affects the very lineaments of the face. It breaks through the eyes and looks, and gives an expressive passion to the countenance. When the mouth thus speaks out of the abundance of the heart, it inspires others with its sentiments and affections, and the man breathes out his soul with his words.—*Bishop Browne.*

God is a Spirit, just and wise,
  He sees our inmost mind:
In vain to heav'n we raise our cries,
  And leave our souls behind.
Nothing but *truth* before His throne
  With honour can appear;
The painted hypocrites are known
  Through the disguise they wear.

JULY 11.

"All is vanity."—ECCLES. i. 14.

WHEREFORE bethink thyself, O deluded world, and write over all thy school doors, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom:" over all thy court gates, "Let not the mighty man glory in his might;" over all thy exchanges and banks, "Let not the rich man glory in his riches." Write down upon thy looking-glasses, "Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain;" upon thy mews and artillery yards, "God delighteth not in the strength of a horse, he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man;" upon thy taverns and inns and alehouses, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise;" upon thy magazines and wardrobes, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." Write upon thy counting-houses, "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his;" and upon thy playhouses, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Yea, upon all thy accommodations write, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."—*John Arrowsmith.*

Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
  Thy better portion trace;
Rise from transitory things
  Towards heaven, thy native place.
Sun, and moon, and stars decay;
  Time shall soon this earth remove
Rise, my soul, and haste away
  To seats prepared above.

JULY 12.

"As ye walk, and are sad."—LUKE xxiv. 17.

WE have all our times of perplexity and sorrow. There are few who have never been conscious of "an hour of darkness," a season in which they have a peculiar sense of spiritual loneliness and desertion, and which is followed by distressing doubts and troubles, similar to those which the disciples felt after the crucifixion of their Lord. I say similar, of course they cannot be the same; their future has become our past; we can now speak of Christ's resurrection, no less than of His life and death, as among the things that have already happened; but we may resemble them in the bitter recollection of our own temporary desertion of Him, the uncertainity of His forgiveness, and the fear lest He should be hiding His face from us for ever. If it be so . . . let us strive, step by step, to follow the two disciples in their quiet journey. Let us meditate on all our Saviour has done and suffered for us; and we may rest assured, that though our paths seem solitary, He is never really far from us: He can read our thoughts; even now He is asking why we are sad. Let us only walk quietly on, and in a little while, under the light of His presence, each doubt and anxiety will pass away.—*W. Adams.*

Where is the God who found thee,
  Who once could make thee glad?
Are not His arms around thee?
  Then wherefore art thou sad?

JULY 13.

"The very God of peace."—1 THESS. v. 23.

GOD was "The Lord of Hosts," and He is still what He was: but He loves to be called "The God of Peace," because He was terrible in that, but He is delighted in this. His mercy is His glory, and His glory is the light of heaven. His mercy is the life of creation, and it fills all the earth; and His mercy is as a sea too, and it fills all the abysses of the deep: it hath given us promises of supply of whatsoever we need, and relieves us in all our fears, and in all the evils that we suffer. His mercies are more than we can tell, and they are more than we can feel; for all the world in the abyss of the Divine mercies, is like a man diving into the bottom of the sea, over whose head the waters run insensibly and unperceived, and yet the weight is vast, and the sum of them is immeasurable: and the man is not pressed with the burden, nor confounded with numbers; and no observation is able to recount, no sense sufficient to perceive, no memory large enough to retain, no understanding great enough to apprehend this infinity: but we must admire, and love, and worship, and magnify this mercy for ever and ever, that we may dwell in what we feel, and be comprehended by that which is equal to God, and the parent of all felicity.

Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

The opening heavens around me shine
  With beams of sacred bliss,
While Jesus shows His mercy mine,
  And whispers I am His.

JULY 14.

"By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better."—ECCLES. vii. 3.

THE blessed man is he, who is under education in God's school; where he endures chastisement, and by chastisement is instructed. The foolish creature is bewitched, sometimes, with the enchantments and sorceries of life. He begins to lose the lively sense of that something, which is superior to the glory of the world. His grovelling soul begins to say, "Is not this charming? Is not that worth a wish?" He must go to the Word of God to know what a thing is worth. If he have lost this habit, when this heart puts these questions he will answer them like a fool. He will forget that God puts His children into possession of these things, as mere stewards; and that the possession of them increases their responsibility. He will plan and scheme to obtain possession of things, which he forgets are to be burnt and destroyed. But God dashes the fond scheme in pieces. He disappoints the project; and with the chastisement, He sends instruction. And then the man sees that Job is blessed—not when God gives him sons and daughters, and flocks, and herds, and power, and honour; but when God takes all these away—not when the schemes of his carnal heart are indulged, but when they are crossed and disappointed.

Richard Cecil.

Then give me any lot,
I'll bless Thy just decree,
So Thou art not forgot—
And I may ne'er dependent be
On any friend, my God, but Thee.

JULY 15.

"Thou hast mightily delivered Thy people."—Ps. lxxvii. 15.

THIS deliverance is not the less free and gracious because Jesus Christ as our Surety and Redeemer has paid the price of it, having been appointed for, and destined to, this great and arduous work by the Father. For, what does that great Father of mercies herein, but in order to our complete discharge, by one certain and ever-to-be-admired way, satisfy Himself of His own, by fastening His only-begotten Son to the cross? The repository of this treasure is opened, the whole price is poured out at once—that great price of redemption, more precious than all the treasures in the world, or even the whole world itself. —"Make me to hear," says David, "the voice of joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice." By that lamentable fall, he had as it were dashed himself against the rock of Divine justice, so that all his bones were broken; but what a voice of joy and gladness is that which should restore full soundness and strength to bones which had, as it were, been crushed and shattered to pieces! Surely it is no other voice than that so often used by our Saviour in the Gospel—how sweet to a soul groaning under the burden of sin! "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee."—*Archbishop Leighton.*

Approach, my soul, the mercy-seat,
Where Jesus answers prayer;
There humbly fall before His feet,
For none can perish there.

JULY 16.

"Truly, the light is sweet."—ECCLES. xi. 7.

THE things of God are the noblest satisfactions to those desires which ought to be cherished and swelled up to infinite; their deliciousness is vast and full of relish, and their very appendant thorns are to be chosen; for they are gilded, they are safe and medicinal, they heal the wound they make, and bring forth fruit of a blessed and a holy life. The things of God and of religion are easy and sweet; they bear entertainments in their hand, and reward at their back; their good is certain and perpetual, and they make us cheerful to-day, and pleasant to-morrow. And spiritual songs end not in a sigh and a groan; but they bring us to the felicity of God, "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." The things of this world are little, and trifling, and limited, and particular, and sometimes necessary because men are miserably wanting, and imperfect; but their pleasure dies like the time it danced awhile, and leaves no footstep but the impression of a sigh. If therefore eternal things be better than temporal, the soul more noble than the body, then let us sit down in religion and make heaven our end, God our Father, Christ our elder Brother, and the Holy Ghost, the earnest of our inheritance.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

Touch our chill'd hearts with vernal smile;
Our wintry course do Thou beguile,
Nor by the wayside ruins let us mourn,
Who have th' eternal towers for our appointed bourne.

JULY 17.

"They are they which testify of Me."—JOHN v. 39.

How profitable and comfortable are the Scriptures in all cases and parts of our life! In adversity, in prosperity, in life, and in death, they are our special comfort. If we must fight, they are a sword; if we hunger, they are meat; if we thirst, they are drink; if we have no dwelling-place, they are a house; if we be naked, they are a garment; if we be in darkness, they are a light unto our going; they are comfortable to kings, to subjects, to old men, to young men, to man and to wife, to father and to child, to master and to servant, to captain and soldier, to preacher and people, to the learned, to the unlearned, to the wise, and to the simple: they are comfortable in peace, in war, in heaviness, in joy, in health and sickness, in abundance, in poverty, in the day-time, in the night season, in the town, in the wilderness; in company, and when thou art alone; for they teach faith, hope, patience, charity, sobriety, humility, righteousness, and all godliness: they teach us to live, and they teach us to die. Therefore hath Paul said well, "The whole Scripture is profitable." It is full of great comfort; it makes the man of God absolute and perfect unto all good works.—*Bishop Jewell.*

This lamp, through all the tedious night
  Of life, shall guide our way,
Till we behold the clearer light
  Of an eternal day.

JULY 18.

"This is that bread which came down from heaven."—JOHN vi. 58.

THE supper of the Lord is not simply Christ's "body and blood," but Christ's "body broken and His blood shed." Here then we have occasion, in the use of this Sacrament, to call to mind the gravity and grievousness of sin, which could not be taken away by any other means than by the shedding of the most precious blood, and breaking of the most pure body of the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, by whom all things were made, and all things are ruled and governed. O who, considering this matter, shall not be touched to repent? Who, in receipt of this Sacrament, can but tremble at the grievousness of his sins, for the which such a price was paid? If there were nothing else to admonish man of sin, how grievous a thing it is in God's sight, surely that one were enough! . . . God our Father, for the tender mercy and merits of His Son, be merciful to us and forgive us our sins, and give us His Holy Spirit, that we now be made ready to receive this Holy Sacrament, to the full rejoicing and strengthening of our hearts in the Lord. Amen.—*John Bradford.*

Bread of the world! in mercy broken;
  Wine of the soul! in mercy shed;
By whom the words of life were spoken,
  And in whose death our sins are dead—
Look on the heart by sorrow broken,
  Look on the tears by sinners shed,
And be Thy feast to us the token
  That by Thy grace our souls are fed. Amen.

JULY 19.

"The day goeth away."—JER. vi. 4.

LIFE is a day, and in a day there are many changes of weather. Youth is the morning, when the sky, perhaps, is clear and serene; everything smiles upon the traveller, and invites him to proceed. But, anon, all is overcast, and the heaven grows black with clouds and wind. The hour of prosperity is past, and the storms of adversity gather round his head. The rain descends, the lightnings flash, the thunder roars, and the Almighty seems to set His face against him: "Fearfulness and trembling come upon him." Nor is this the whole of the danger. There are those that lie in wait to deprive him of all that is dear and valuable. Now he has need of all his courage and steadfastness, and it behoves him to march on resolutely, holding fast, in one hand, "the shield of faith," in the other "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;" strengthening himself with those divine words of the Psalmist: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known My name. I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him My salvation."—*Bishop Horne.*

Stronger by weakness, wiser men become,
As they draw near to their eternal home;
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

JULY 20.

"Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?"—JER. viii. 22.

READER, if with you there be moments (as I know there are) when the better mind is struggling for utterance, and you feel that you are not what you ought to be; that you are degraded and unworthy; that you are not fit to stand in the gaze of the pure and penetrating eyes of Ever-present Deity—O listen to the voice which is speaking within you then. It is a real want of your true self which is revealing itself—the want of pardon, restoration, righteousness—which, if it does not develop into penitence and peace here, must deepen into the despair of eternity. And in one way only can it be satisfied: by winning Christ, who is our righteousness, and by being found in Him. Count them all but loss, then—those pleasures which do not make you happy, and the trifling carelessness which is so unworthy an immortal being—and be content to suffer their loss that you may win Christ. Take your sins—yourself—to Him. Pray to and through Him. Trust in Him. Imitate Him. Let your life henceforth be earnest, as of those who are to live for Christ: and you will enjoy the deep peace of the justified soul and the new creation of those who are in Christ Jesus, when old things are passed away.—*Bishop Jackson.*

Mercy, my Judge! mercy, I cry,
With blushing cheek and tearful eye;
If sin can weep, Love can forgive,
O say the word, my soul shall live.

JULY 21.

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"—JOHN ix. 35.

EARTH has no such happiness, heaven has no such gift, as a sound, vigorous, reasonable faith. It holds fast to the anchor of the cross, and the soul rides safely, when doubts and fears and the memory of past sins, and suspicions of God's love, come whelming down upon it. It covers from temptation; and against its broad, strong shield, the arrows of the evil one ring harmlessly. It nerves to great efforts for God's sake and man's good, makes self-sacrifice an enjoyment, and cheerful ungrudging obedience the impulse of a buoyant gratitude. It is the peace and hope of the death-bed; and as things seen grow dim to the failing eye of sense, it quickens the spirit's vision to look beyond the grave, and to discern the things which are not seen and are eternal. O, if we have not this faith—and yet more, if we have lost what we had—let us seek it in earnest, persevering, struggling prayer, from Him "who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given us."—*Bishop Jackson.*

Faith spans up bliss; what sin and death
Put us quite from,
Lest we should run for't out of breath,
Faith brings us home;
So that I need no more, but say—
"I do believe,"
And my most loving Lord straightway
Doth answer—"Live."

JULY 22.

"According to His own purpose and grace."—2 TIM. i. 9.

THE Apostle points out, that our salvation is from the *grace*, the free favour of God, not from any claim of merit on our part. Yet he does not allow us to doubt that good works are required of us, and that we are bound to be zealous of them, inasmuch as Christ "gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity"—that is, not merely from the *penalty* of sin, but from sin itself. And in his Epistle to Titus he briefly mentions the three heads of duty, to the practice of which we are to be trained—our duty as relates to *ourselves*, to our *neighbours*, and to *God*. The Christian is to live soberly, that is, with temperance and purity; righteously, that is, justly; and, again, godly, that is, piously towards God. These same heads of duty are recounted, though in a different order, in the General Confession in our Prayer Book, when we pray "that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life." . . . After having set forth that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by God's mercy that we are saved, he adds, "These things I will that thou affirm constantly, in order that they who have believed in God may be careful to maintain good works."

Archbishop Whately.

Let every grace combine to prove
  Thy Spirit seals me from on high;
Faith, meekness, resignation, love,
  Let each adorn me, ere I die.

JULY 23.

"If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."—JOHN xi. 21.

THESE little words plainly show that these afflicted sisters both believed that, had they been permitted to order the course of events, the result would have been far happier. If something had happened which had not happened, the event might have been less wretched. Oh, how often do reflections similar to this, barb the arrow of affliction with a poignancy which nothing else can give! These are the thoughts which in our wretchedness make us doubly wretched: "If we had taken such a course, if we had acted in some other manner, how different would have been the issue!" There can be nothing more unwise, perhaps few things more unholy, than reasoning thus. In dwelling upon secondary causes, we overlook the first great cause of all—the God of Heaven and earth, who alone ordereth all things, and doeth all things well. Has the Lord no share in the decision? Did He not direct our present disappointment? Was He not present when our friend was taken from us? Duties are ours, events are God's.—*H. Blunt.*

What Thou shalt to-day provide,
  Let me as a child receive;
What to-morrow may betide,
  Calmly to Thy wisdom leave:
'Tis enough that Thou wilt care,
Why should I the burden bear?

JULY 24.

"They believed not on Him."—JOHN xii. 37.

IN whatever form it is manifested, the neglect of God's revelation by those to whom He has offered it, is the rejection of Christ, and that is the rejection of salvation. It is this which we so greatly need to see. That common life which does really put Christianity aside; which steals on so quietly with its even flow; but into which the faith of Christ never enters as a constraining motive; which knows no earnestness in prayer, no deep contrition, no struggle with sin, no grasp of faith upon the cross, it is not the life of a true servant of Christ. It is in truth, however we may try to disguise it from ourselves, the life of one who, though all the miracles of Christ are wrought before his eyes, does not believe in Him. And surely this is the greatest indignity which we can put on Him. For if God has given to us a revelation, He must have given it in His love for the receiver. It must be as much meant by God for him as the natural light is meant for the enlightenment of his natural eye; and for him therefore to neglect it, is to do the highest conceivable dishonour to its giver.

Bishop Wilberforce.

When shall I hear the inward voice,
  Which only faithful souls can hear?
Pardon and peace, and heavenly joys,
  Attend the promised Comforter.
O come, and righteousness divine,
And Christ, and all with Christ, are mine.

JULY 25.

St. James.

"Ye know not what ye ask."—MATT. xx. 22.

THIS was our Saviour's mild reply to an ambitious prayer. We shall do well to reflect on it. It is indeed true, that when we ask for temporal blessings, we know not what we ask. Men sigh for wealth, for children, or some particular lot in life; and when they have got their desire, find that the success has brought with it some care or sorrow, some snare or temptation, which they would otherwise have been free from. Far better is it to leave all our temporal concerns in God's hands, neither asking nor wishing for anything but what seemeth best to His godly wisdom; fearing to choose for ourselves, and still remembering His word, "Ye know not what ye ask." The petition which He has taught us includes whatever is needful for us; "Give us day by day our daily bread:" as to all the rest, we should remember what is written—"Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." The first places in Christ's kingdom are gained by those who most faithfully deny self, and most patiently bear the Cross, like their Master. This is intimated in His words, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?"

Bishop Trower.

Let but my fainting heart be blest
With Thy sweet Spirit for its guest,
My God! to Thee I leave the rest;
"Thy will be done."

JULY 26.

"Peace I leave with you."—JOHN xiv. 27.

THAT the Son of God might become the merciful and faithful high priest of His Church, it behoved Him to be made in all things like unto His brethren; not only to clothe Himself in their outward form, but to take upon Him also their inward nature. Hence, in contemplating the wonderful history of His life, we see Him influenced by the same affections that influence ourselves, and manifesting the same dispositions. From His cradle to His grave, we behold in Him the Son of man, as well as the Son of God. When He knew that His hour was come, that He should depart out of the world unto His Father, we find Him feeling and acting as many of His brethren have felt and acted on the bed of death. He thinks of the beloved friends from whom He is about to be separated, and is troubled in spirit at the thought of leaving them. . . . When His end drew near, He made, as it were, His will and testament. Houses and lands indeed, silver and gold, He had none to give; but He bequeathed to them a treasure far more valuable—a treasure which silver and gold could never buy. "Peace," says He, "I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."—*C. Bradley.*

Peace is the gift I leave with you;
  My peace to you bequeath;
Peace that shall comfort you through life,
  And cheer your souls in death.

JULY 27.

"Soberly, righteously, and godly."—TITUS ii. 12.

THESE three expressions of the Apostle, comprise our self-government, our duty towards our neighbour, and our devotion to our God. In respect of the first, he who is a doer of the word, gives diligence that in his person he may be chaste and temperate in all things; in his temper meek and calm; in his general manner and deportment, steady, composed, circumspect, and watchful: it is his "heart's desire and prayer," that he may "prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God;" that he may be "diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" and thus he desires to live *soberly* in this present world. In his relative duties also he studies to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour. For in whatever station of life it has pleased his Heavenly Father to place him, the peculiar proprieties of that station occupy his attention. His light shines before men. He renders to all their dues, "tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;" these he *thinks* of, in these he exercises himself, and thus in respect of those around him, he lives "*righteously* in this present world."—*Dean McNeile.*

Spirit of purity and grace,
  Our weakness pitying see:
O make our hearts Thy dwelling-place,
  And worthier Thee.

JULY 28.

"I spake to thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear."—JER. xxii. 21.

THE ear is heedless and ungoverned, and the heart insolent and obdurate, till one is pierced, and the other made tender by affliction. Prosperity leaves a kind of dulness and lethargy upon the spirits, so that the still voice of God will not awaken a man; He must therefore thunder and lighten about his ears, before he will be brought to take notice that God speaks to him. But besides, prosperity does not only shut the ear against counsel, by reason of the dulness that it leaves upon the senses; but also on account of that arrogance which it brings, and which of all other qualities stops the entrance of advice most, by making a man think himself too great and wise to admit of the assistance of another's wisdom. Much prosperity utterly unfits such persons for the trials of adversity; which yet God uses as the means to correct a soul grown vain and extravagant. The earth he treads upon is his sole joy and inheritance, and that which supports his feet supports his heart also. God had spoken to him in his prosperity, and he had said, "I will not hear."—*R. South, D.D.*

But what are Heaven's alarms to hearts that cower
In wilful slumber, deepening every hour,
  That draw their curtains closer round,
  The nearer swells the trumpet's sound!
Lord, ere our trembling lamps sink down and die,
Touch us with chastening hand, and make us feel Thee
    nigh.

JULY 29.

"That which I see not, teach Thou me."—JOB xxxiv. 32.

LOVE is a blinding thing, and above all other love, self-love; and every man is naturally his own flatterer, he deals not faithfully and sincerely with himself in the search of his own evils.—We are to entreat of God, to be led into ourselves, and be applied to the work of self-searching by His own hand, not only to have a right apprehension of the law given us, but a true sight of ourselves. "Cleanse me from secret faults," says David; that is, not only those hidden from men, but even from myself, as is clearly his meaning by the words preceding—"Who can understand his errors?"—Oh! what a deal of vanity and love of this world, envy and secret pride, lurks in many of our hearts, that we do not at all perceive, till God causeth us to see it.—Matchless teacher! that teacheth more in one hour than men can do in a whole age; that can cure the invincible unteachableness of the dullest heart, give understanding to the simple, and open the eyes of the blind. So, then, would we be made wise, wise for eternity, learned in real living divinity, let us sit down at His feet, and make this our continual request—"What I see not, teach Thou me."—*Archbishop Leighton.*

Fountain of Light and living Breath,
  Whose mercies never fail nor fade;
Fill me with Life that hath no death,
  Fill me with Light that hath no shade;
Appoint the remnant of my days,
To see Thy power, and sing Thy praise.

JULY 30.

"He that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him."—Ps. xxxii. 10.

A LITTLE grace, a spark of true love to God, a grain of living faith, though small as mustard-seeds, is worth a thousand worlds. One draught of the water of life gives interest in, and earnest of, the whole fountain. It becometh the Lord's people to be thankful; and to acknowledge His goodness in what we have received, is the surest as well as the pleasantest method of obtaining more. . . . O the blessed privilege of prayer! O the wonderful love, care, attention, and power of our great Shepherd! His eye is always upon us; when means and hope fail, when everything looks dark upon us, when we seem shut up on every side, when we are brought to the lowest ebb, still our help is in the name of the Lord who made Heaven and earth. To Him all things are possible; and before the exertion of His power, when He is pleased to arise and work, all hindrances give way, and vanish like a mist before the sun. And He can so manifest Himself to the soul, and cause His goodness to pass before it, that the hour of affliction shall be the golden hour of the greatest consolation. . . . The Lord has given us to know His name as a resting-place and a hiding-place; a sun and a shield. The way is rough, but He trod it before us, and is now with us in every step we take.—*John Newton.*

The heart that trusts, for ever sings,
And feels as light as it had wings;
A well of peace within it springs:
Come good or ill,
Whate'er to-day, to-morrow brings,
It is His will!

JULY 31.

"Hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."—HEB. iii. 13.

HARDNESS of heart is incompatible with the wisdom which is full of mercy. The bosom must be softened by Divine influence. Redeem the time, therefore, that you have hitherto lost in a cold, lifeless, formal religion. Love God, love your neighbour, with the ardour of a sincere mind, and the simplicity of infantine innocence. Seek Jesus Christ with the earnestness of one who is a Christian by choice, and not merely because he was born in a Christian country, or of Christian parents; nor because the laws of the land have established that religion, and it is creditable to appear among its professors in places consecrated to public devotion. Be Christians on your pillows, in the occupation of your merchandise or agriculture, as well as in your church, and on the day set apart for Divine service. Let Christ, by the Holy Ghost, be formed in your hearts, restoring in you the image of God in which you were created, but which was sadly sullied, or quite defaced by the fall of the first Adam, and can be restored only by the mercy of the second.

Vicesimus Knox.

Tender Spirit, dwell with me,
I myself would tender be.
Shut my heart up, like a flower,
At temptation's darksome hour;—
Open it, when shines the sun,
And His love by fragrance own.

AUGUST 1.

"Be not faithless, but believing."—JOHN xx. 27.

THE first acts of a life of faith, and the last acts of a life of unbelief, are alike within our power. The many disciples who "went back" of old—because His saying concerning the eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood was hard to their questioning unbelief—and "walked no more after Him," acted upon no compulsion; but under the leading of their own evil heart of unbelief turned away from Him, with whom, if they had remained, He would by His word, by His presence, by His grace, and by His love, have led them on step by step until He had overcome their doubts, and given them a living faith and the joy of His salvation. But they "went back;" they walked no more after Him; and they perished. And ever so it is with us. He who, when a doubt assails him, yields to it; who, as doubts multiply, intermits his prayers, is less frequent at communion, becomes more conversant with bolder speculations, and allows the growing thought that reason contradicts revelation, is indeed "going back" and "walking no more after" Christ.—*Bishop Wilberforce.*

True I am weak, ah, very weak—but then
I know the source whence I can draw relief;
And though repulsed, I still can plead again—
"Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!"

AUGUST 2.

"What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?"—Ps. viii. 4.

GOD magnifieth man, in that He enriches him with the bountiful gift of reason, visits him with the inspiration of grace, exalts him with the greatness of imparted virtue; and whereas he is nothing in himself, yet through the bounty of His loving-kindness, He vouchsafes to him to be a partaker of the knowledge of Himself. And the Lord "setteth His heart upon man" so magnified, in that after His gifts He brings forth judgment, weighs merits with exactness, rigidly tries the weights of life, and exacts punishment from him afterwards the more strictly in proportion as He prevents him here more bounteously by the benefit bestowed. So then let the holy man view the immensity of the Supreme Majesty, and recal the eye of reflection to his own frailty. Let him see that flesh cannot comprehend that which truth through the Spirit teaches concerning himself. Let him see that man's spirit, even when it is lifted up, is not able to bear the judgment which God holds over it, on a trial of strict recompensing, and let him say: "What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him, and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him?"

St. Gregory.

Devoid of merit, what have I to boast,
When man's best virtues are unworthy Thee?
Yet in Thy mercy will I place my trust,
And in the Cross my hope and promise see.

AUGUST 3.

"Behold, I will bring health and cure."—JER. xxxiii. 6.

BELIEVER! you have one hard lesson to learn, that is the evil of your own heart! you know something of it, but it is needful that you should know more. Are you not amazed sometimes that you should have so much as a hope? But why should you fear? Our sins are many, but His mercies are more; our sins are great, but His righteousness is greater; we are weak, but He is power. . . . Wait on the Lord, and He will enable you to see more and more of the power and grace of our High Priest. The more you know Him, the better you will trust Him; the more you trust Him, the better you will love Him; the more you love Him, the better you will serve Him. This is God's way; you are not called to buy, but to beg; not to be strong in yourself, but in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. He is teaching you these things, and I trust He will teach you to the end. Remember, the growth of a believer is not like a mushroom, but like an oak—many suns, showers, and frosts pass upon it before it comes to perfection; and in winter, when it seems dead, it is gathering strength at the root. Be humble and diligent, fix your eye upon the Lord Jesus, and all will be well.

John Newton.

Venture on Him—venture wholly;
Let no other trust intrude:
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.

AUGUST 4.

"Let us search and try our ways."—LAM. iii. 40.

A CONSIDERABLE part of the wrong conduct of mankind proceeds, not so much from any strong inclination to do amiss, as from being so unhappily thoughtless, that the slightest motive is enough to determine their choice any way. We engage at first in a course of behaviour, we scarce know why or how: then go on in the way we have set out without thinking whither it leads us, and by use grow fond of it, and zealous for it; yet are too indolent all the while once to ask ourselves, at what we are aiming? Now this case, without reflection, is quite irrecoverable; but a little reflection in time, would easily set all right. . . . . For there is no possibility, either of viewing a bad action, in a full light, without abhorrence, or of weighing its consequences without terror; wickedness, therefore, always banishes thought, and piety and virtue encourage it. The Psalmist speaks of self-amendment as the immediate fruit of self-inspection: "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto Thy testimonies: I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy commandments."

Archbishop Secker.

Alas! how little they can know
  The end of the beginning,
Who calculate how far to go
  Into the ways of sinning:
Turn to Aceldama, and there
  Witness the suicide's despair.

AUGUST 5.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures."—Ps. xxiii. 2.

He shall set me in the rich and pleasant pastures of His doctrine, and in the contemplation of heavenly things, through which the minds of godly men are fed and nourished with unspeakable joy: and near unto the plenteous floods of the Holy Ghost, and the sweet waters of the Holy Scriptures He will feed me; in which places the sheep of the Lord are nourished to eternal life. The Scripture useth this word "feed" in many significations: sometimes to teach and instruct: sometimes to rule and govern, but in this place the prophet uses "feeding" as well for instruction by God's word, as also for defence and safeguard of God's people by God's most mighty power. He uses this word "pasture" for the word of God itself, as the only food of a man's soul to live upon, as meat and drink is for the body. He uses the word "lead" for conducting, that the man which is led at no time go out of the way, but may always know where he is. It is therefore as if He had spoken without allegory thus: God instructs me with His word, and conducts me with His Holy Spirit, so that I cannot err or perish.—*Bishop Hooper.*

O spread Thy covering wings around,
  Till all our wanderings cease,
And at our Father's loved abode,
  Our feet arrive in peace!

AUGUST 6.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."—HEB. ix. 27.

IT is the universal experience, that a life of half a century or more, appears in the retrospect to be very short. And yet when that short period again has passed, very few indeed of those now reading my words, will be actors on this world's brief stage; and those few will have been warned by senses dimmed, and failing powers, that their last act is drawing to its close. On most of us the curtain will have fallen for ever: whether our summons came suddenly, or whether disease crept on slowly in the quiet death-chamber, with time for preparation and amidst the soothing offices of affection, it will matter but little then. One and all we shall have been launched into the endless future. But the happiness and essence of that future is the presence and likeness of Christ. And if so, is it not the plainest of inferences, that our likeness to Christ must begin here, in this our time of probation and education for eternity? "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." The old man has to be put off, and the new man to be put on, which, after the image of God, "is created in righteousness and true holiness."—*Bishop Jackson.*

Lord, prepare us by Thy grace!
  Soon we must resign our breath,
And our souls be call'd to pass
  Through the iron gate of death.

AUGUST 7.

"Great fear came upon all the Church."—ACTS v. 11.

FEAR rightly directed is both proper and salutary to such a creature as man. The fear of God and the dread of sin, as displeasing to God, is the greatest blessing to the soul. The awful example of Ananias and his wife would produce and cherish this. "Great fear" might well come upon all the disciples, when they saw before their eyes the consequence of sin. This consequence we are ready to acknowledge. The difficulty is, to feel a due conviction of the truth. We confess, that "the wages of sin is death." But "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."* Here the sentence *was* executed speedily; here that judgment was witnessed, which it is part of our probation to believe; to receive on faith. And the whole event may well incline us to pray with David, "Keep back Thy servant, O Lord, from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."

Archbishop Sumner.

Lord, I'm oppress'd! O undertake
For me, for my Redeemer's sake!
Unclean, unworthy—I confess,
Yet, O! accept His righteousness.

* Eccles. viii. 11.

AUGUST 8.

"I waited patiently."—Ps. xl. 1.

PATIENCE is the endurance of any evil, out of the love of God, as the will of God. There is nothing too little, in which to approve ourselves to God; nothing too little in which, without God, we should not fail; nothing too great which, with the help of God, we may not endure. The offices of patience are as varied as the ills of this life. We have need of it with ourselves and with others; with those below and those above us, and with our own equals; with those who love us, and those who love us not; for the greatest things, and for the least; against sudden inroads of trouble, and under our daily burdens; disappointments as to the weather, or the breaking of the heart: in the weariness of the body, or the wearing of the soul; in our own failure of duty, or others' failure to us; in every-day wants, or in the aching of sickness, or the decay of age; in disappointment, bereavement, losses, injuries, reproaches; in heaviness of the heart, or its sickness amid delayed hopes. In all these things, . . . patience is the grace of God, whereby we endure evil for the love of God, and keep ourselves still and motionless, that we offend not God.—*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*

Ask only for a holy heart,
And a submissive will,
To bear thy cross, to do thy part,
To trust Me, and be still.

AUGUST 9.

"Looking unto Jesus."—HEB. xii. 2.

IN every enjoyment, O Christian, look unto Jesus; receive it as proceeding from His love, and purchased by His agonies. In every tribulation look unto Jesus; mark His gracious hand managing the scourge, or mingling the bitter cup; attempering it to a proper degree of severity. In every infirmity and failing look unto Jesus, thy merciful High Priest. In every prayer look unto Jesus, thy prevailing Advocate. In every temptation look unto Jesus, the Author of thy strength. But especially, when the hour of thy departure approaches, when all the springs of life are irreparably breaking—then look unto Jesus with a believing eye. Like expiring Stephen, behold Him standing at the right hand of God, on purpose to succour His people in this their last extremity. Yes, my Christian friend, when thy journey through life is finished, and thou art arrived on the very verge of mortality—then, oh! then, look unto Jesus. View Him as the only "way" to the everlasting mansions, as the only "door" to the abodes of bliss.—*Hervey.*

Waiting, watching, ling'ring near Him,
All life long to love and fear Him;
Finding this my best employ,
Chiefest business, purest joy!

AUGUST 10.

"He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."—HEB. xiii. 5.

WHEN sorrow and the cross come upon thee, seek not with the world to distract it; drive it not away with fresh sources of sorrow, but bid it welcome; cherish it as a heavenly visitant, as a messenger sent from God with healing to thy soul; and thou shalt find that thou "entertainest angels unawares." Thou shalt find the bow in the cloud, His light arising out of darkness, His form upon the troubled waters; and if He hush them not, He shall say unto thy soul, "Fear not, for I am with thee;" He shall make it gladlier to thee to lie low in trouble and anguish while He is with thee, than ever any of the joys of this world while He was less present with thee. The blessed lot is not to live joyously in the world, undisturbed by sorrow or suffering, having our good things in this life left to our own ways: it is to lie low—well is it for us, if it be of our own accord, yet anyhow to lie low under His cross; though for a time it lie heavy upon us, it is not so heavy as sin. May God give us faithful hearts, that we may pray to be enabled in earnest to take up the cross of our Lord daily! make us ready to be partakers of His sufferings, sharers of His death, who died for all, that "they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."—*Plain Sermons.*

Whate'er events betide,
Thy will they all perform;
Safe in Thy breast my head I hide,
Nor fear the coming storm.

AUGUST 11.

"That ye may be perfect and entire."—JAMES i. 4.

THERE is not a day or a waking hour of our life, in which occasion does not occur for controlling some evil of our nature, and thus subduing it; and for exercising some virtue of the Christian character, and by the exercise, improving it. The every-day occurrences which take place form a course of discipline, from which, if turned to account, we may reap the greatest advantage. The petty annoyances which we meet with, the things which every now and then oppose our will, thwart our desires; the unreasonableness of others, their fretfulness, or impatience, or unkindness, or injustice, and such like things as these, are to be looked upon as so many opportunities afforded us trying the temper of our minds, and for calling into exercise our charity, and patience, and meekness, and love, and thus of confirming them, and of making them more habitual and natural to us. Oh, could we but bear this in mind, what an interest it would give to the most ordinary and commonplace occurrences!—*George Bellet.*

The common round, the daily task,
Should furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.

AUGUST 12.

"A devout man, and one that feareth God."—ACTS x. 2.

CORNELIUS was "a devout man"—not only what the world calls "a decent character, a good sort of man," by which is often meant a goodness with no religion, and very little morality; but a thorough pious man, one that "feareth God," that set God always before him, and regarded *Him* in all that he said and did. Such a fear is the first and principal part of divine wisdom, and it is peculiarly excellent in a soldier; because he who fears God as he ought to do will fear nobody else. True courage must be founded in true religion; for a bad man cannot be a brave man, with his eyes open and his thoughts about him. Nor could a general give a better exhortation to his army than that given by Christ to His disciples: "Fear not them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: Fear Him who, after He hath killed, hath power to destroy both body and soul in hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." And a heathen historian,* who was himself a great commander, could say, "The soldier who first serves God, and then obeys his captain, may confidently hope to overcome his enemy."

Bishop Horne.

They fear not Satan or the grave,
They feel Thee near, and strong to save,
Nor fear to cross e'en Jordan's wave,
Because they cling to Thee.

* Xenophon.

AUGUST 13.

"If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."—JAMES iii. 2.

As the tongue is the most powerful engine to the happiness of mankind and to the glory of the Creator, so it is also the most formidable in works of mischief and impiety. With our words it is that we bless God; and show forth the praises of His wisdom and power; but it is with our words, also, that we deny Him. With our words, we may defend the cause of the innocent poor; but it is by our words, also, that we oppress and slander them: we may flatter the sinner, and misrepresent and perplex the righteous; we may "call evil good, and good evil;" and when we measure the vast flood of private and public misery and of guilt, to which this single fountain gives rise; when we hear of sinners hardened by false advice, innocence ruined by false vows, hearts broken by slanderous reports—and God provoked by daily curses and blasphemy; we shall not be surprised that David describes an evil tongue as full of "the poison of asps"—that St. James holds it out as "an unruly evil," "full of deadly poison;" or that he should call that man "perfect, who offendeth not in word."—*Bishop Heber.*

Words are mighty, words are living:
  Serpents with their venomous stings,
Or bright angels, crowding round us,
  With heaven's light upon their wings:
Every word has its own spirit,
  True or false, that never dies;
Every word man's lips have utter'd,
  Echoes in God's skies.

AUGUST 14.

"For what is your life?—it is even a vapour."—JAMES iv. 14.

LIFE bears us on like the stream of a mighty river; our boat at first glides gently down the narrow channel, through the playful murmurings of the little brook and the windings of its grassy border. The trees shed their blossoms over our young heads; the flowers on the brink seem to offer themselves to our young hands; we are happy in hope, and we grasp eagerly at the beauties round us; but the stream hurries us on, and still our hands are empty. Our course in youth and manhood is along a wider and a deeper flood, and amid objects more striking and magnificent. We are animated by the moving picture of enjoyment and industry which passes before us, but our energy and dependence are both in vain. The stream bears us on, and our joys and our griefs alike are left behind us: we may be shipwrecked, but we cannot anchor; our voyage may be hastened, but it cannot be delayed. Whether rough or smooth the river hastens towards its home, till the roaring of the ocean is in our ears, and the tossing of his waves is beneath our keel, and the lands lessen from our eyes, and the floods are lifted up around us, and the shore loses sight of us, and we take our last leave of earth; and of our further voyage there is no witness but the Infinite and Eternal.

Bishop Heber.

Swiftly thus our fleeting days
  Bear us down life's rapid stream:
Upward, Lord! our spirits raise!
  All below is but a dream.

AUGUST 15.

"Lay up His words in thy heart."—JOB xxii. 22.

THE end of the word of God is to save, and therefore we term it the word of life. The way for all men to be saved is by the knowledge of that truth which the word hath taught. And if eternal life is a thing of itself communicable unto all, it behoveth that the word of God, the necessary means thereto, be so likewise. Wherefore the word of life has been always a treasure, though precious, yet easy as well to attain as to find; lest any man desirous of life should perish through the difficulty of the way. To this end the word of life no otherwise serves, than only in the nature of a doctrinal instrument. It saves, because it makes wise unto salvation. Wherefore the ignorant it saves not; they who live by the word must know it. And being itself the instrument which God has purposely framed to work the knowledge of salvation in the hearts of men, what cause is there why it should not of itself be acknowledged a most apt and likely means to leave an apprehension of things divine in our understanding?—*Hooker.*

O may Thy Heavenly pages be
  My ever dear delight!
And still new beauties may I see,
  And still increasing light!
Divine Instructor, Gracious Lord,
  Be Thou for ever near;
Teach me to love Thy sacred word,
  And view my Saviour there!

AUGUST 16.

"Ye were not redeemed with silver and gold."—1 PET. i. 18.

You, whom the heavenly warfare hath marked for divine service, preserve untainted your Christian course, by the virtues of religion. Let prayer and reading be your assiduous employments. Sometimes speak with God; at other times hear Him speak to you. Let Him instruct you by His precepts; let Him regulate you. Whom He hath made rich, none shall make poor. There can be no penury with him whose heart has once been enriched with celestial bounty. Roofs arched with gold, and houses inlaid with marble, will be vile in your eyes, when you know that your own minds ought rather to be cultivated and adorned; that this house is more valuable, which the Lord has chosen to be His temple, in which the Holy Ghost has begun to dwell. Let us adorn this house with the paintings of innocence, let us illuminate it with the light of righteousness. This will never fall into ruin through the decays of time. Its ornaments shall never fade. Whatever is not genuine is precarious, and affords to the possessor no sure foundation. This remains in its culture perpetually vivid; in honour and in splendour, spotless and eternal.—*St. Cyprian.*

Go, wing thy flight from star to star,
From world to luminous world as far
As the universe spreads its flaming wall:
Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,
And multiply each through endless years,
One minute of Heaven is worth them all.

AUGUST 17.

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word."—1 PET. ii. 2.

GOD has marked Implicitness and Simplicity of Faith with peculiar approbation. He has done this throughout the Scripture; and He is doing it daily in the Christian life. An unsuspecting, unquestioning, unhesitating spirit, He delights to honour. He does not delight in a credulous, weak, and unstable mind. He gives us full evidence, when He calls and leads; but He expects to find in *us*—what He Himself bestows—an open ear and a disposed heart. Though He gives us not the evidence of sense, yet He gives such evidence as will be heard by an open ear, and followed by a disposed heart:—"Thomas! because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." We are witnesses what an open ear and a disposed heart will do in men of the world. If wealth is in pursuit—if a place presents itself before them—if their families and affairs are the object—a whisper, a hint, a mere chance, is a sufficient ground of action. It is this very state of mind, with regard to religion, which God delights in and honours. He seems to say . . . "Put thy hand in Mine. Follow all My leadings. Keep thyself attentive to every turn."—*R. Cecil.*

As a little child relies
  On a care beyond his own,
Knows he's neither strong nor wise,
  Fears to stir a step alone;
Let me thus with Thee abide,
As my Father, Guard, and Guide.

AUGUST 18.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."—ACTS xvi. 31.

THE whole of that which we call saving or justifying faith, is comprised in these two things: a hearty assent of our understanding to all that Jesus Christ and His Apostles delivered to mankind, as the will of God; and a hearty consent of our wills, following thereupon, to be governed by those laws and rules that are prescribed to us. To have a saving faith in Jesus Christ, is to own or accept of Him in all His offices; to receive Him as the great Prophet, that came to declare the will of God to mankind, and under that notion, to give a belief to whatsoever He taught. To receive Him as the great High Priest, that was to make atonement for the sins of the world; and under that notion, to depend upon the merits of His sacrifice and intercession for the remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion. And lastly, to receive Him as the great King that God has set over His Church; and under that notion, to resign up ourselves to be wholly disposed of and governed by Him. This is St. Paul's faith "made perfect by love," and this is St. James's "good works proceeding from a lively faith," by which, he saith, we are to be justified.

Archbishop Sharp.

O could I but believe!
Then all would easy be;
I would, but cannot—Lord, relieve;
My help must come from Thee!

AUGUST 19.

"Watch unto prayer."—1 PET. iv. 7.

THE river that runs slow, and creeps by the bank, and begs leave of every turf to let it pass, is drawn into little hollownesses, and spends itself in smaller portions, and dies with diversion; but when it runs with vigorousness and a full stream, and breaks down every obstacle, making it even as its own brow, it stays not to be tempted by little avocations, and to run into holes, but runs into the sea through full and useful channels. So is a man's prayer, if it moves upon the feet of an abated appetite; it wanders into the society of every trifling accident, and stays at the corners of fancy, and talks with every object it meets, and cannot arrive at heaven. But when it is carried upon the wings of strong desires, a swift motion, and a hungry appetite, it passes on through all the intermedial regions of clouds, and stays not till it dwells at the foot of the throne, where Mercy sits, and thence sends holy showers of refreshment. Some little drops will turn aside, and fall from the full channel by the weakness of the banks; but the main cause is still pursued.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

What are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?
For so the whole round earth is everywhere
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.

AUGUST 20.

"Be subject one to another."—1 PET. v. 5.

LET humility towards God prompt you to fear God, and to keep His commandments with unqualified obedience; to pray to Him, to praise Him, and to thank Him for all His blessings; to put your trust in His mercy for salvation through the precious blood-shedding of His Son; to rely for grace to serve and please Him on the sanctifying influence of His Holy Spirit. Let your humility towards each other prompt you to "love as brethren;" "in lowliness of mind each to esteem other better than himself;" to "forbear one another in love;" to endeavour to keep the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Copy, in a word, the humility of your Saviour; and be encouraged and supported by the hope of receiving some measure of His reward. For the exceeding great humility which He manifested on taking upon Himself the human nature, and suffering therein for the sins of men, "God highly exalted Him" in the same nature, "and gave Him a name which is above every name."—May God mercifully grant that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His resurrection through the same Jesus Christ Our Lord." Amen.—*Bishop Mant.*

Calmly He rises from His seat,
A girded Levite, see Him stand,
And stoop to wash the pilgrim feet
Of those who on His steps attend;
Then breathing out the law anew,
"Thus do, as I have done to you."

AUGUST 21.

"Add to your faith virtue."—1 PET. i. 5.

IF any one be really so deluded as to think that the orthodoxy of his creed will atone for the irregularities of his life, let him observe that the Apostle Paul reasoned with Felix not only of "Righteousness and Judgment to come," but of "Temperance," or self-denial. The opposition of our nature to the will of God is the foundation of the duty of self-denial. We are born in sin—we delight in sin: we must be torn from sin, or we shall never leave it. The leading agent in the work of self-denial is the Spirit of God; and the man in whom He works will be temperate in all things—he will restrain his passion and his pride. To be meek and lowly as the Lord—to be poor and patient in spirit—to forgive injuries—to abhor himself for his iniquities, is the duty of the highest as well as the lowest of men. All love of praise, or vain-glorious self-complacency on the possession of honours, talents, or any other advantages, natural or acquired, must be mortified and crushed, as utterly irreconcilable with that self-abhorrence which lies so deep in the nature of repentance and humility.—*Henry Martyn.*

Mortal! if life smile on thee, and thou find
All to thy mind,
Think, who did once from Heaven to Hell descend,
Thee to befriend;
So shalt thou dare forego, at His dear call,
Thy best, thine all.

AUGUST 22.

"Always abounding in the work of the Lord."—1 COR. xv. 58.

As love delighteth men, so zeal pleaseth God, for zeal is the love of God. Therefore every sacrifice was offered with fire to show what zeal they should burn with, who come to offer praise or thanks unto the Lord. Therefore the Holy Ghost descended in fire to show the fervency of them upon whom the Holy Ghost resteth. Therefore the cherubim were pourtrayed with wings before the people, to show that they should be as earnest and quick about the Lord's business as the cherubim. Therefore God would not take a lame nor a halting sacrifice, to show how He abhorreth slackness in all our duties. Therefore St. James saith, "Be swift to hear:" we must be swift to pray, swift to obey, swift to do good. For he is not condemned only which doeth not the Lord's business, but he which doeth it *negligently*, that is, he which doeth anything before it, like him that would bid his friends farewell, and follow Christ after. . . . The hound which runs but for the hare, runs as fast as possibly he can. The hawk which flieth but for the partridge, flies as fast as possibly she can; and shall he who runs for heaven, creep more slowly than the dial?

Henry Smith.

Shine on me, Lord! new life impart,
Fresh ardour kindle in my heart;
One ray of Thy all-quickening light
Dispels the sloth and clouds of night.

AUGUST 23.

"I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications."—DAN. ix. 3.

IF in this manner, dearly beloved, we come unto God our Father, and prostrate ourselves before "the throne of His Grace," then surely, surely, we shall "find mercy;" then shall the Lord look upon us for His mercy's sake in Christ! then we shall hear Him "speak peace unto His people:" for He "is gracious and merciful, of great pity and compassion;" He cannot be chiding for ever, His anger cannot last long to the penitent. Though we weep in the morning, yet at night we shall have our sorrows to cease; for He hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner. Oh! turn you now, I beseech you yet once again, and then the kingdom of Heaven shall draw nigh. The eye hath not seen, the ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man is able to conceive the joys prepared for us, if we repent, amend our lives, and heartily turn to the Lord. Oh, therefore, right dear to me in the Lord turn, turn you; depart from evil, do good, follow peace and pursue it; put on Christ, confess His truth, be not ashamed of His Gospel. O Lord God of hosts, turn us unto Thee, for the glory of Thy name's sake: turn Thyself unto us, and us unto Thee; and we shall praise Thy name for ever.—*John Bradford.*

Jesus, our Lord! to Thee we call,
Thou art our life, our hope, our all;
And we have nowhere else to flee,
No sanctuary, Lord, but Thee.

AUGUST 24.

St. Bartholomew.

"And there was also a strife among them."—LUKE xxii. 24.

THE reason why St. Luke's account of this dispute is chosen for the festival of St. Bartholomew is said to have been derived from an old tradition, that the noble descent of that Apostle had given occasion to the question that arose among our Lord's followers. However this may be, our attention cannot be too often directed to a passage so eminently humbling and instructive. It is humbling to find strife even among the chosen followers of the Prince of Peace; and to learn that the occasion of such strife was a dispute which of them should be greatest. We should rather have expected that the strife would be which of them should give up all distinction of that kind to others. "The servant of the Lord must not strive," unless where the contest is which shall be least selfish, most patient, gentle, and lowly. Our proud hearts are slow indeed to receive this rule, and unwilling to remember that those disciples are most honoured in Christ's Kingdom, who, being most employed in serving others, are thus the truest followers of Him, who was among us as one that serveth. We should be humbled on reflecting, how slow is the growth of grace within us.—*Bishop Trower.*

O for the glory and the bliss,
When all that pain'd or seem'd amiss
Shall melt with earth away!
When saints beneath their Saviour's eye,
Fill'd with each other's company,
Shall spend in love the eternal day

AUGUST 25.

"I will be glad in the Lord."—Ps. civ. 34.

WHAT are allowable amusements? Such recreations, and such alone, as may, in some degree, assist our faculties of mind and body, to perform that great work, for which they were united, and placed in this probationary world. He that is studious of truth, he that is not willing to deceive himself, let him cast away those noxious and unfriendly pleasures, which chain down the soul, as luxurious food subjugates the body. Let things true be preferred to things false; things eternal, to things momentary; things useful, to things agreeable. Let nothing be grateful to thy sight, which thou mayest not justly and piously behold: nothing pleasant to thine ear, which doth not nourish thy soul, and render thee a better man. True pleasure is the companion and associate of virtue. A pleasure not frail and fleeting, like the base pursuits of men imbruted and enslaved to the body; but solid and perpetual; delighting without pause or intermission.—*Bishop Jebb.*

Fill up each hour with what will last;
  Buy up the moments as they go;
The life above, when this is past,
  Is the ripe fruit of life below.

Sow truth if thou the true wouldst reap;
  Who sows the false shall reap the vain;
Erect and sound thy conscience keep;
  From hollow words and deeds refrain.

AUGUST 26.

"Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"—1 JOHN iii. 17.

LET us consider, that nothing is more conformable to God's nature, or renders us more like Him, than beneficence and mercy; and that consequently nothing can be more grateful to Him: that nothing is more disagreeable and contrary to the essential disposition of God, than illiberality and unmercifulness, and that therefore nothing can be more distasteful to Him. Look everywhere about nature, consider the whole tenour of Providence, scan all the actions of God, and you will find them all conspiring in attestation to those sweet characters which the Holy Scriptures ascribe to God, representing Him to be "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness;" affirming that "He is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." We therefore, by liberal communication to the needy, do most approach to the nature of God, and most exactly imitate His practice. Our Saviour proposes God's mercy to us, both as a pattern directing, and as an argument inducing us to mercifulness, implying it also to be a good sign, declaring us the children of God. "Ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil."

I. Barrow, D.D.

I know not how to praise
  Thy mercy and Thy love;
But deign Thy servant to upraise,
  And I shall learn above.

AUGUST 27.

"There is no fear in love."—1 JOHN iv. 18.

LET us imagine the case of one, on whom the waters of regeneration have been poured, to all outward appearance, in vain: and let us suppose him at length raised up from his seeming death in trespasses and sins, by the Sanctifying Spirit . . . in the first moments of his awakening, he will behold nothing but visions of terror. The powers of the world to come will appear arrayed against him, and his spirit will be smitten down by the sight. But this tempest of the soul will ultimately be succeeded by the "peace which passeth understanding."—The heart-stricken man no longer bursts into mockery, when he is told that "the way of transgressors is hard;" that "there is no peace for the wicked." . . . Who can speak worthily of the first dawn of that celestial vision, in which Jehovah is seen as the God who is Love itself? When the sinner was walking in the valley of the shadow of death, he saw a God of terror.—He now beholds Him as the gracious Being, who is the shield and the reward of them that seek Him. Be it our prayer, that God may awaken in us a hatred of sin, by a salutary fear of His Divine Majesty; that God the Redeemer may save us from despair, and that God the Sanctifier and Comforter may soften our hearts to that pure love of God, "which casteth out fear."—*C. W. Le Bas.*

A sweet but solitary beam,
  An emanation from above,
Glimmers o'er life's uncertain dream—
  We hail that beam, and call it Love.

AUGUST 28.

"He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ."—
1 JOHN v. 6.

OUR Saviour Christ entered into the world with all the circumstances of poverty. He had a star to illustrate His birth; but a stable for His bed-chamber, and a manger for His cradle. The angels sang hymns when He was born; but He was cold and cried, uneasy and unprovided. He lived long in the trade of a carpenter; He, by whom God made the world, had, in his first years, the business of a mean and ignoble trade. He did good wherever He went; and almost wherever He went was abused. He deserved heaven for His obedience, but found a cross in His way thither: and if ever any man had reason to expect fair usages from God, He it was only that could deserve that or anything good. But, after he had chosen to live a life of virtue, of poverty, and labour, He entered into a state of death; whose shame and trouble were great enough to pay for the sins of the whole world. In the words of Scripture, He was "the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world." And then His passion continues even after His Resurrection. For it is He that suffers in all His members, it is He that is "the Lord of Life," and is crucified again, in all the sufferings of His servants and sins of rebels.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

O! who like Thee, so calm, so bright,
Thou Son of man, Thou Lord of light:
O! who like Thee, did ever go
So patient through a world of woe!

AUGUST 29.

"This is love, that we walk after His commandments."—2 JOHN 6.

GOD the Father is love, God the Son is love, God the Holy Ghost is the Father's and the Son's love. This love requires a production of something like it in ourselves. He lives to no purpose, who lives without this grace. But he that keeps his eyes always fixed upon God, as the supreme, the sole object of his thoughts and desires, he meditates upon Him, delights in Him, and is fed and nourished by Him. A man thus devoted to Him sings His praises, pours out his prayers, reads His Word, performs every part of his duty, and demeans himself in every action of his life, with such care and circumspection, as if his bodily eyes saw God present with him. The way to know God truly is to love Him. It is to very little purpose that we read, or meditate, that we hear, or preach, or pray, if this be not at the bottom of our religious exercises. The end of God's loving us is, that we may love Him in return. Love brought down God to men. It was love that wounded Him for our transgressions; incomprehensible, unexampled love that made His soul heavy to the death, and poured out His heart's blood on the cross; love that provided that sure retreat for miserable sinners.

St. Augustine.

Were the whole realms of nature mine,
  That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so Divine,
  Demands my heart, my life, my all.

AUGUST 30.

"Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling."—JUDE 24.

DELIBERATE, habitual sin cannot possibly consist with spiritual growth; but the shaking of a man's steadfastness by a sudden tornado of temptation (which was St. Peter's case) may do so. The great question is whether, after every such fall, the will recovers its spring and elasticity, and makes a fresh start with new and more fervent prayer and resolve. Indeed the making many fresh starts after relapses of infirmity is a hopeful sign of growth. In order to any great attainment in spiritual life, there must be an indomitable resolve to try and try again, and still to begin anew amidst much failure and discouragement. On warm dewy mornings in the spring, vegetation makes a shoot; and when we rise, and throw open the window, we mark that the May is blossoming in the hedge-rows. And those periods when a man can say, "I lost myself sadly yesterday in temper or in talk; but I know that my crucified Lord took upon Him those sins and answered for them, and to-day I will earnestly strive against them in the strength of His Spirit, invoked into my soul by earnest prayer;" these are the warm dewy mornings of the soul, when the spiritual life within us sprouts and blossoms apace.

E. M. Goulburn, D.D.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
  To work, and speak, and think for Thee;
Still let me guard the Holy fire,
  And still stir up Thy gift in me:
Ready for all Thy perfect will,
  My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death Thy endless mercies seal,
  And make the sacrifice complete.

AUGUST 31.

"Sin is the transgression of the law."—1 JOHN iii. 4.

MY brethren! law is a great blessing: it keeps us out of harm's way. We must begin by obeying, and end by loving. It is a good thing for young men, and for young Christians, to listen diligently, even now, to God's ten commandments, as they are read (with great wisdom), Sunday by Sunday, in our Church of England—to listen to them, first in their letter, and then in their spirit; remembering who has said, that the *thought* of murder, and the *thought* of adultery, are, in God's sight, of the nature of the act; that an unkind thought is the one, and that an impure thought is the other. When that is borne in mind, who shall not ask God's mercy (as the Rubric bids us all) for his past breach of each one of God's commandments, and God's grace to keep him from the breach of each one of them in the future? And who shall not say, from a very sincere conviction, these words of the General Confession: "We have offended against Thy holy laws; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is no health in us"?—*C. J. Vaughan, D.D.*

"On the rock of Thy commandments
Fix me firmly, lest I slide;
With the glory of Thy presence,
Cover me on every side;
Seeing none save Thee is holy,
God for ever glorified!"

SEPTEMBER 1.

"Those who by continuance in well-doing seek for glory."—ROM. ii. 7.

HE that expects to have Christ his Saviour when he dies, must devote himself entirely to God while he lives, and very seriously resolve that nothing in this world shall prevail with him to do what he believes will displease God. He will submit patiently to God's will under all trials and afflictions, because they are of God's ordering. He will depend upon God's good providence, for delivering him out of danger, and for supplying all his wants; he will endeavour, with respect to his neighbour, to be just in his dealings. He will be faithful to his word, and keep his tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering, and will readily forgive, as he hopes for forgiveness from God. He will strive to be at peace with all, and will be obedient to his governors and pastors; and he will endeavour to do all these things with this view, *to please God.* Every Christian, who has been so happy as to lead such a life as this, will have reason to hope well for himself, and to trust in the mercy, and goodness, and promises of God, when he comes to die.—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Go, rule thy will,
Bid thy wild passions all be still:
Know God, and bring Thy heart to know
The joys which from religion flow;
Then every grace shall prove its guest,
And I'll be there to crown the rest."

SEPTEMBER 2.

"All have sinned; and come short of the glory of God."—
ROM. iii. 23.

THIS then is a sinner. He is one who has missed the mark of being; has failed to answer his purpose alike in work and destiny; has turned aside from setting forth God's praise, and from walking in the way which leads to glory. Such were they whom the coming of Christ Jesus into the world contemplated. "To save sinners." "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." If we do not recognize ourselves in this description, then neither can we see ourselves in the object. If we do not feel ourselves to have first missed the mark, then neither does Christ come to us with the offer of His salvation. St. Paul could see himself in the description. "Sinners," he says, "of whom I am chief." Yes, each one of us knows more of himself than he can possibly know of any other. When he takes into account the opportunities and the warnings, the mercies and forbearances which have marked his course, and then also the follies and the backslidings and the obstinacies by which he has gone astray and done wickedly; he feels, indeed, that he can, without affectation, take upon his lips St. Paul's confession, and say that, if Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, He came to save those of whom he, he himself, is chief.

I. Vaughan, D.D.

Oh! to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee.

SEPTEMBER 3.

"The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusteth in Him."
—Ps. xxviii. 7.

DAVID, after his deliverances from Saul and his victories over all his enemies round about him, in Ps. xxx. 6, 7, confesses that his prosperity had raised him to such a pitch of confidence, as to make him say that he should never be moved; God, of His favour, had made his hill so strong; but he adds, almost in the same breath, "Thou didst hide Thy face, and I was troubled." The sun shines in his full brightness but the moment before he passes under a cloud. Who knows what a day, what an hour, nay, what a minute may bring forth? He who builds upon the present, builds upon the narrow compass of a point; and where the foundation is so *narrow*, the superstructure cannot be high, and strong too. Possibilities are as infinite as God's power; and whatsoever *may* come to pass, no man can certainly conclude shall *not* come to pass. Neither should any one despond in a time of pressing adversity. As he that presumes, steps into the throne of God; so he that despairs, limits infinite power to finite apprehensions. Surely all the reason of mankind cannot suggest any solid ground of satisfaction but in making God our friend.

Robert South, D.D.

We know not what the path may be,
As yet by us untrod,
But we can trust our all to Thee,
Our Father, and our God!

SEPTEMBER 4.

"Agree with thine adversary quickly."—MATT. v. 25.

AND why? because *thou art in the way.* As long as there is life there is hope, we say; and so, as long as there is the enjoyment of a temporal life, there may be just hope of an eternal. These days of thy respite, they are golden days: every hour presents thee with salvation; every day lays heaven and happiness at thy door. Wherefore go forth, and meet thy adversary; do not fly off and say, "there is a lion in the way;" that He is austere and hard to be appeased. No; He does not come clothed with thunder and terror, but with all the sweetness and inviting tenderness that mercy itself can put on. Thou hast a friendly enemy; while on the one hand He shakes His rod at thee for departing from Him, with the other He graciously beckons thee to return. O consider, then, this thy inestimable advantage, that thou art yet *in the way*, yet in the possibility of reconcilement. Thou art not put to sue for terms of peace, but only to accept those that are freely offered. Close in with such a potent adversary; 'tis thy eternal interest, thy life: wherefore take that excellent advice of the Spirit:—"Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and so ye perish from the way." (Ps. ii.)—*Robert South, D.D.*

Oh! give us hearts to love like Thee,
  Like Thee, O Lord, to grieve
Far more for others' sins than all
  The wrongs that we receive.
One with Thyself, may every eye
  In us Thy brethren see
The gentleness and grace that spring
  From union, Lord, with Thee!

SEPTEMBER 5.

"When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned."
—ISA. xliii. 2.

BLESSED for ever and ever be that mother's child whose faith hath made him the child of God. The earth may shake, the pillars of the world may tremble under us, the countenance of the heaven may be appalled, the sun may lose his light, the moon her beauty, the stars their glory; but concerning the man that trusted in God, if the fire have pronounced itself unable as much as to singe a hair of his head; if lions, beasts ravenous by nature, and keen with hunger, being set to devour, have, as it were, religiously adored the very flesh of the faithful man; what is there in the world that shall change his heart, overthrow his faith, alter his affection towards God, or the affection of God to him? "I am persuaded that neither tribulation, nor anguish, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor the sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature," shall ever prevail over me.—I have a Shepherd full of kindness, full of care, and full of power; unto Him I commit myself.—*Richard Hooker.*

Though in the paths of death I tread,
With gloomy horrors overspread,
My steadfast heart shall fear no ill,
For thou, O Lord! art with me still.

SEPTEMBER 6.

"Enter ye in at the strait gate."—MATT. vii. 13.

IT is an easy matter to sin, and that, we know, is the broad way that leads to hell; so broad that they who walk in it can find no bounds or limits in it wherewithin to contain themselves. And usually it is as plain as it is broad. There are no crosses to be taken up, no self to be denied—no such tedious troublesome things as examining our hearts, and mortifying our lusts, as praying or hearing, as fasting or watching. These only are to be found in the narrow path that leads to heaven. And hence it is, that our Saviour tells us, many there be which finds this way, and go in at this wide gate that leads to ruin, because they see not where it leads; but they see the baits and allurements which are in it, which they crowd about as fishes about the hook, or as flies about a candle, till they be destroyed. And therefore we may well conclude it is a very easy thing to go to that place of torments, or rather that it is a hard, a difficult matter to avoid it; the way being so narrow that leads from it, that it is a difficult thing to find it. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life,"—"Enter ye in" at the gate.—*Bishop Beveridge.*

Oh, may I daily, hourly strive
  In heavenly grace to grow;
To Thee, and to Thy glory live,
  Dead else to all below;
Tread in the path my Saviour trod,
Though thorny, yet the path of God!

SEPTEMBER 7.

"All things work together for good."—ROM. viii. 28.

THUS the children of God know, that in whatsoever state they are, it is the one which is really best for them. What a powerful motive is thus furnished for the exercise of a contented mind! With such a conviction how can the real Christian be otherwise than contented, whatever may befall him? What ground, he asks, have I for being dissatisfied? My desire and aim is, "so to pass through things temporal, that I finally lose not the things eternal." What circumstances may be best for me, I know not: but Christ my Saviour knows, and will lead me into them. Does He make my way rough, difficult, and thorny? He sees that it is the way in which it is safest for me to walk. Far then from being discontented and repining, I have reason to be thankful and to rejoice. I have reason to cry out with the Apostle, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need."—*E. Cooper.*

Saviour! I breathe the prayer once Thine,
"Father, Thy will be done, not mine!"
One only blessing would I claim;
In me, oh! glorify Thy Name!
Make me submissive, keep me still,
"Suffering according to Thy will!"

SEPTEMBER 8.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?"—Ps. xlii. 5.

DOES the Psalmist's mournful question speak the language of your *grief?* let his consequent resolve be the language of your *faith:* "O put thy trust in God. I will yet thank Him, which is the help of my countenance, and my God!" Exercise your privilege of access to Him, through the Saviour, Christ Jesus the Lord. Fear not! However your joy be changed into sorrow, the love of your heavenly Father knows no change: no passing cloud which the world interposes can dim the brightness of His favour. His love and favour veer not with the shifting seasons of good or ill fortune. He loves alike the rich and the poor, the prosperous and the unfortunate. Delay not then, in the season of adversity, to draw nigh unto God! "Cast thy burden upon the Lord." Cling to Him as to a present, sure friend—flee to Him as a bird to its covert, when storm and tempest rage. Afflictions and sorrows are neither the result of chance, nor the tokens of Divine anger. They are the declared tokens of love from the Everlasting Father, who afflicts us for a time here, that we may be prepared for a glorious eternity hereafter.

J. J. James.

Blest is my lot, whate'er befall:
What can disturb me, what appal,
Whilst as my Rock, my Strength, my All,
Saviour! I cling to Thee?

SEPTEMBER 9.

"God is our hope and strength."—Ps. xlvi. 1.

HOPE is the gentle breath which revives and nourishes the soul of man, and the words of Christ are the words of hope: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." His coming, His dying, His living, all preclude despair. His coming assures the soul that it is precious in the sight of God, though rendered vile by sin. His dying secures the ransom, the strength of the law is broken, for the penalty of sin is paid. His "living at the right hand of God to make intercession for us" is a continual consolation that the pledge of mercy which He has given, shall not be in vain; that the good work which He has begun, shall not be marred by the assaults of Satan, but shall be performed to the end by the power of the Holy Ghost. Let us then each for ourselves fulfil the prophecy, "In His name shall the Gentiles trust." "Let us trust in His name," in the weakness of youth, in the vigour of manhood, "in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment."

Archbishop Sumner.

Then welcome harmless grave;
By thee to heaven I'll go:
My Lord, His death shall save
Me from the flames below.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Saviour see.

SEPTEMBER 10.

"Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."—MATT. xi. 29.

ALTHOUGH whilst He was here, our Saviour Christ was not only the best but the greatest man on earth, yet He carried Himself to others with that meekness, humility, and respect, as if He had been the least. As He never admired any man for his riches, so neither did He despise any man for his poverty; poor men and rich were all alike to Him. He affected no titles of honour, but submitted Himself to the meanest services for the good of others, even to the washing His own disciples' feet; and all to teach us that we can never think too lowly of ourselves, nor do anything that is beneath us. His humility was the more remarkable in that His bounty and goodness to others was so great. Wherever you read He was, you read still of some good work—though He had many implacable enemies, yet He bore no grudge or malice against them, but expressed as much love and favour for them as for His friends. Oh! how happy, how blessed should we be, could we be thus loving to one another, as Christ was to all—humble in our own sight, despising none? By this should all men know that we were His disciples indeed.—*Bishop Beveridge.*

Could we bear from one another
  What He daily bears from us?
Yet this glorious friend and brother
  Loves us though we treat Him thus!
Though for good we render ill,
He accounts us brethren still.

SEPTEMBER 11.

"Be sober, be vigilant."—1 PET. v. 8.

How blessed and wonderful, beloved, are the gifts of God! Life in immortality, brightness in righteousness! Truth in full assurance, faith in confidence! Temperance in holiness! And all these hath God subjected to our understandings. What therefore shall those things be which He has prepared for them that wait for Him? The Creator and Father of the worlds, the most Holy, He only knows both the greatness and beauty of them. Let us therefore strive with all earnestness, that we may be found in the number of those that wait for Him, that we may receive the gifts which He hath promised. And how shall this be, beloved? By fixing our minds, through faith, towards God, and seeking the things which are pleasing and acceptable unto Him; by acting conformably to His holy will; and following the way of truth, casting away from us all unrighteousness and iniquity, covetousness, strife, evil manners, deceit, whispering, detraction; all hatred, pride, and boasting, vain-glory and ambition. For they that do such things are hateful to God; and not only they that do them, but also such as have pleasure in them that do them.—*St. Clement.*

When the world's up, and every swarm abroad,
Keep well thy temper, mix not with each day:
Despatch necessities; life hath a load
Which must be carried on, and safely may:
Yet keep these cares without thee! let the heart
Be God's alone, and choose the better part.

SEPTEMBER 12.

"Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."—MICAH vii. 19.

IF we bring broken, believing hearts towards His mercy-seat, it is the Lord's Name to forgive all sorts of offences, iniquity, transgression, and sin. It is His free compassion to cast all our sins into the depth of the sea. Now, the sea, by reason of its vastness, can drown mountains as well as mole-hills; the boundless ocean of God's mercies can swallow up our mightiest sins much more. It is His merciful power to blot out our sins as a cloud. Now the strength of the summer's sun is able to scatter the thickest fog, as well as the thinnest mist—nay, to drive away the darkest midnight; the irresistible heat of God's free love, shining through the Sun of Righteousness upon a penitent soul, to dissolve to nothing the most desperate work of darkness, and most horrible sin, far more easily. But this mystery of mercy, and miracle of God's free love, is a jewel only for truly humbled souls. Let no stranger to the life of godliness meddle with it. Let no swine trample it under his feet. May we so "earnestly repent," and be "heartily sorry" for our misdoings, that God may "forgive us all that is past," through Jesus Christ our Lord.—*Robert Bolton.*

Lo! with deep contrition turning,
  Humbly at Thy feet we bend:
Hear us fasting, praying, mourning,
  Hear us, spare us, and defend.
Though our sins our hearts confounding,
  Long and loud for vengeance call,
Thou hast mercy more abounding,
  Jesu's blood can cleanse from all.

SEPTEMBER 13.

"Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."—ROM. xiv. 17.

"WICKEDNESS," says a wise heathen,* "is a wonderfully diligent architect of misery; of shame, accompanied with terror and commotion, and remorse, and endless perturbation." To be redeemed then, in the very lowest sense, is to be released from this degrading servitude. It is deliverance to the captive, health to the diseased, life to the dead. But the righteousness of God's kingdom is no negative attainment. It is not merely the absence of evil, but the prevalence of good. Religion, at the just height, and in its full proportion, is the source of all virtue. It possesses and animates the entire man. In the understanding, it is knowledge; in the life, it is obedience; in the affections, it is charity; in our conversation, it is modesty, calmness, gentleness, quietness, candour; in our secular concerns, it is uprightness, integrity, generosity. It is the regulation of our desires, the government of our passions, the harmonious union of "whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report." It is a partaking of the divine nature; a conformity to the image of God's Son; a putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ.—*Bishop Jebb.*

The men of grace have found
Glory begun below,
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.
The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.

* Plutarch.

SEPTEMBER 14.

"That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."—ROM. xv. 4.

WHEN we survey the world at large, when we examine even that portion of it which is termed the religious world, we must lament that profession too commonly outruns performance; that multitudes look abroad with eagerness, who are unable, or unwilling, to concentrate their views at home; that, in efforts for the improvement of others, too many neglect the improvement of themselves; that the Bible is more praised than read, more circulated than consulted; that in all ranks of the community, men are to be found, more solicitous to waft the sacred volume from the Ganges to the Mississippi, than to make it their companion, their guide, and their own familiar friend. In times like the present, there is much to divert us from our own business and bosoms; it is, therefore, the more indispensable, that in the first instance we look narrowly to ourselves; that we first make the Word of God our own peculiar study; and, having felt its holy influence within, that we proceed wisely and affectionately to diffuse that influence around, beginning with those whom God and nature have committed to our special care.—*Bishop Jebb.*

Would I others' vineyards keep,
  Warn of dangers while they slept?
I must rouse myself from sleep,
  Mine own vineyard must be kept.
They who struggle to be free
  From the faith they own but fear,
Oft believe the truths they *see*,
  While rejecting those they *hear*.

SEPTEMBER 15.

"Whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it."—
MATT. xvi. 25.

OH, be bold to believe this truth, and to act upon it —that to lose your life is to find it! Dare to believe that the law of self-sacrifice is the law of God's moral world; that no man may live for himself; that if he will attempt it, his life shall be no life, for it shall be death! To this law the Son of God set His seal, when He lived for men, and when He died for them; yea, the Father set His seal to it also, when He gave up the well-beloved Son of His love, the Son that had been in His bosom from eternity, to the shameful death of the Cross. . . . Fear not to act on this law; dare to throw away yourself that you may receive back a richer life. Each thing that promises pleasure to the flesh, that flatters the natural mind, if God bids you to renounce it, do so boldly. . . . Live for your brethren in acts of patience, of self-denial, of labour, and you shall be living truly for yourself. . . . The children of God (like Daniel) thrive on their harder fare, better than children of the world on its dainties.

Archbishop Trench.

I want a sober mind,
A self-renouncing will,
That tramples down and casts behind
The baits of pleasing ill:
A soul inured to pain,
To hardships, grief, and loss;
Bold to take up, firm to sustain,
The consecrated Cross!

SEPTEMBER 16.

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."—1 COR. i. 31.

ALMOST all the world are continually judging wrong of their own title to esteem; and vain of imagined excellencies, when at most they do but equal those around them, or, perhaps, are peculiarly deficient. Now indisputably the strongest claim is that of a pious, and benevolent, and reasonable disposition, expressed in a suitable behaviour. This, however disregarded by a thoughtless world, is the *one thing needful:* the groundwork of private and public, of present and future happiness. The human heart, notwithstanding its degeneracy, loves and reverences it, even though unwillingly, wherever seen: superior orders of beings look down upon it with complacency, and God Himself approves it, as His own resemblance. To this character then let every one aspire, who seeks true honour, and place nothing in competition with it. "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches. But let him that glorieth, glory in this; that he understandeth and knoweth Me; that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."—*Archbishop Secker.*

True religion, sprung from God above,
  Is like her fountain—full of charity;
Embracing all things with a tender love,
  Full of good-will and meek expectancy;
Full of true justice and sure verity
    In heart and voice.

SEPTEMBER 17.

"We speak the wisdom of God."—1 COR. ii. 7.

THE more we contemplate the mystery of redemption, the more we shall see in it a masterpiece of Divine wisdom, and the more sincerely shall we join the exclamation of St. Paul, "O the death of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Human intellect could not conceive a plan more wondrous in wisdom to be possible; nay, it is a subject of astonishment to angelic minds; for God has designed, "that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." How justly, therefore, does the Apostle add, 'Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Then rejoice, ye children of Wisdom, by whom she is justified. Happy are ye, for the things which God hath hidden from the wise and prudent, He hath revealed unto you. Then be not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but continue to display its efficacy by the holiness of your lives, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

Henry Martyn.

Who wisdom find are truly blest,
The "Tree of Life" is then possess'd;
Of all that's valued, this is best:
'Tis *present* and *eternal* rest.

SEPTEMBER 18.

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."—MATT. xix. 24.

It is to those that *trust* in riches that this sentence of our Lord's peculiarly applies; but even to all rich men in general, it holds out this important admonition, that their situation is at the best a situation of difficulty and danger; that their riches furnish them with so many opportunities of indulging every wayward wish, and spread before them so many temptations, so many incitements to luxury, intemperance, pride, forgetfulness of God, and contempt of everything serious and sacred, that it is sometimes too much for human nature to bear; that they have therefore peculiar need to take heed to their ways, to keep their hearts with all diligence, and, above all, to implore with unceasing fervour that help from above, which can alone enable them to overcome the world, and vanquish all the powerful enemies they have to contend with. . . . "Charge them (says St. Paul) that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on everlasting life.

Bishop Porteus.

Deny me wealth; far, far remove
The lure of power or name,
Hope thrives in straits, in weakness love,
And faith in this world's shame.

SEPTEMBER 19.

"The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice."—Ps. xcvii. 1.

It ought to be matter of exceeding joy to all the inhabitants of the world, that amidst all the uncertainties, and hazards, and variety of fortunes, which they here find themselves exposed to, there is One above that governs all. God that made the world is the King of it. All the beings of the universe, angels, men, and devils, with all other animate or inanimate things in heaven and earth, as they are His creatures, so are they truly and properly His subjects, and act entirely in subordination to Him, as ministers and instruments do under the guidance of the principal agent. God doth as truly reign in the world as any king does in his kingdom; He as truly orders the affairs of it, as any master does those of his own family. Nay, a man's own thoughts and actions are not by a thousand times so much attended to by himself—are not so much in his care—as the affairs of the universe are attended by, and are the care of God Almighty. Happy therefore are the "inhabitants" of the earth; happy are the remotest isles thereof—as the Psalmist tells us, "He is holy in all His ways, righteous in all His doings; and His tender mercies are over all His works."

Archbishop Sharp.

The heavens are not too high;
His praise may thither fly:
The earth is not too low;
His praises there may grow:
Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.

SEPTEMBER 20.

"O how I love Thy law."—Ps. cxix. 97.

RELIGION has been, and is, the delight of a great part of our fellow-creatures throughout Christendom. It may be ours if we will duly apply our minds to it. Consider with what ardour of attachment many seek pictures, books, the works of art, the objects of taste and fancy. They learn to love them by applying their minds to them. Half the application bestowed on things, which at best are but toys, if bestowed on religion, would make your chief delight—the guardian of youth, the comfort of the aged and afflicted. You would no longer consider its duties and employments as heavy and dull: you would feel not only the offices of charity, but devotion, sweet to your soul. The gracious words of Gospel truth, of prayer and thanksgiving, would come o'er thine ear, as the poet says—

Like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets.

It is justly said that in devotional offices passion becomes reason, and transport temper. Heaven must disdain the cold prayer, the lukewarm praise of insensibility and indifference. . . . Be it the great endeavour of all who would obtain wisdom from above, to conciliate, by fervent prayer, the grace of God, which will remove all hardness of heart, the cause of that coldness and insensibility, which are too often most unjustly honoured with the name of moderation.

Vicesimus Knox.

Form Thou our wayward hearts, and let them be
In stronger faith to Thy glad service given;
Till, o'er the margin of Time's surging sea,
We sing the song of Heaven.

SEPTEMBER 21.

St. Matthew.

"He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom."
—MATT. ix. 9.

FEW stars in the firmament of the Church shine brighter than that of St. Matthew. And what was St. Matthew originally? A man conversant, not with rural, but city life; not with contemplation, but with business: not an unsophisticated fisherman, but a collector of taxes for the Roman Government—one who sat daily at the receipt of custom, driving a trade essentially secular. Yet God Incarnate crossed his path, and singled him out of the throng as one who should draw many souls, minted anew with the image and superscription of the heavenly King, into the treasury of God; and sat at meat in his house in company with many publicans and sinners; and set him upon one of the twelve thrones, which Apostles shall visibly occupy in the regeneration of all things; and placed around his brow, as a coronet, the Pentecostal tongue of fire. It is a great lesson, that, if only our hearts are right and true, we may find Christ—or rather may be found of Him—in the traffic of secular affairs. May we so learn this lesson as to know it, not in theory only, but by experience!—*E. M. Goulburn, D.D.*

There are in this loud stunning tide
  Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
  Of the everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart,
  Through dusky lane and wrangling mart;
Plying their daily task with busier feet,
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

SEPTEMBER 22.

"Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour."—ZECH. viii. 16.

As a Christian, you will esteem it your duty, constantly to speak the truth, according to the information you have received, in all the affairs and occurrences of life. You will lay a charge upon your conscience to give no commendations where you think they are not due; nor to flatter any as possessed of excellencies which you see not in them; nor to speak as if you regarded them with peculiar respect, when you only design by this means to pay your court, to please the vanity of the human heart, or to deceive. For though in the commerce of the world, this is valued as an accomplishment, it is, in fact, a horrid perversion of language, a piece of dissimulation which Christian simplicity abhors. And as sincerity will be conspicuous in all your conversation with respect to *persons* and things, so the same excellent temper will display its influence with respect to all your promises and engagements. When you have promised to do any good office, the right of the thing promised hath, before the God of truth, passed over from you to another; consequently you will esteem yourself obliged to stand to the performance of your word, though it may be to your own prejudice.

Henry Venn.

Come, let us search our ways and see,
  Have they been just and right?
Is the great rule of equity
  Our practice and delight?
Do we in all our conduct here
  Integrity maintain,
And, knowing God is always near,
  Renounce unrighteous gain?

SEPTEMBER 23.

"If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."—1 Cor. viii. 2.

In a nature so unsearchable as that of God, and a scheme so vast as that of His universal government, there must be many things which creatures of our limited faculties cannot approach towards comprehending; and merely for want of comprehending, may fancy to be full of incredibilities; which, could we but know more, or would we but remember that we know so little, would instantly vanish. In matters, therefore, which we understand so very imperfectly, to set up human imagination against divine authority; to rely on crude notions, that things are impossible which proper testimony shows to be true in fact; or that God cannot be, or do, what, by His own declarations, He is, and hath done; betrays a disposition widely distant from the modesty which becomes us. Men may indeed be too easy of belief; but it is just as great a weakness to be too full of suspicion. Reverence for antiquity may impose upon us; but fondness for novelty may do the same thing. Whoever, therefore, would proceed in the right path, must be attentive to the dangers on each side. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."—*Archbishop Secker.*

As evening's pale and solitary star
  But brightens while the darkness gathers round;
So faith, unmoved amidst surrounding storms,
  Is fairest seen in darkness most profound.

SEPTEMBER 24.

"I Am."—Exod. iii. 14.

WHEN God speaks of Himself and His own eternal essence, He saith, "I AM THAT I AM;" so when He speaks of Himself with reference to His creatures, and especially to His people, He saith "I AM." He doth not say, "I am their friend, their father, or their protector." He doth not say, "I am their light, their life, their pride, their strength or tower," but only "I AM." He sets, as it were, His hand to a blank, that His people may write under it what they please that is good for them. As if He should say, Are they weak?—*I am strength.* Are they poor?—*I am riches.* Are they in trouble?—*I am comfort.* Are they sick?—*I am health.* Are they dying?—*I am life.* Have they nothing?—*I am all things.* I am wisdom, and power; I am justice and mercy; I am grace and goodness; I am glory, beauty, holiness, eminency, perfection, all-sufficency, eternity, Jehovah, I AM. Whatsoever is pure and holy, whatsoever is great or pleasant, whatsoever is good or needful to make man happy, that I AM. So that, in short, God here represents Himself unto us as a universal good, and leaves us to make the application of it to ourselves, according to our several wants, capacities, and desires, by saying only in general, "I AM."—*Bishop Beveridge.*

All glory to the eternal Word,
Earth's Lord and King;
All glory to the eternal Word,
Ye angels sing!
His name—
I AM.

SEPTEMBER 25.

"Teach me good judgment and knowledge."—Ps. cxix. 66.

THIS prayer has a special application to the tender and sensitive child of God.—The faculty of conscience partakes, with every other power of man, of the injury of the fall, and therefore is liable to misconception. It often pronounces its verdict from the predominance of feeling, rather than from the exercise of judgment. Again, matters of trivial moment are often insisted upon, to the neglect of important principles. External points of offence are more considered than the habitual mortification of the inward principle. Conformity to the world in dress and appearance is marked with stronger censure than the general spirit of worldliness, in the temper and conduct of outward nonconformists; while the spirit of separation from the world (which may exist in a wider range of Christian liberty, than the narrow perception of some professors has conceived) is totally disregarded. Thus are nonessentials often confounded with fundamentals—things indifferent with things unlawful.... Conscience therefore cannot be safely trusted without the light of the word of God; and most important is the prayer, "*Teach me good judgment and knowledge.*"—*C. Bridges.*

I want the spirit of power within,
Of love, and of a healthful mind—
Of power to conquer inbred sin,
Of love to Thee and all mankind.

SEPTEMBER 26.

"I hate and abhor lying."—Ps. cxix. 163.

WELL had it been for Eve and for her children, had she turned from the tempter's lie with this strong determination. But, "Ye shall not surely die" has from that fatal moment been a most effectual instrument in captivating unwary souls. So plausible is it in itself, so agreeable to our natural desires and inclinations, that it is readily cherished, even where the first contact with temptation assures the wretched victims that its *deceit is falsehood.* But they do not "hate and abhor it;" and therefore justly are they "given up to believe it." It is very important to take this verse as expressing an *abhorrence* of the literal sin of *lying* in all its forms. A lie is so gross a sin, that Christians are perhaps disposed to spiritualize this expression rather than to analyze some of the plausible shapes in which the sin may be detected. Exaggeration; a false gloss; a slight deviation from the straight course; excuses for faults: all these are forms of *lying* to be shunned, hated, and abhorred by the man who is having fellowship with God. Believer! would you summon "indignation, vehement desires, zeal, revenge" against it, then learn to "*abhor*" it, not only as your enemy, but as God's.—*C. Bridges.*

Lie not; but let thy heart be true to God,
Thy mouth to it, thy actions to them both:
Cowards tell lies, and those that fear the rod;
The stormy working soul spits lies and froth.
Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie:
A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.

SEPTEMBER 27.

"The Sun of Righteousness."—MAL. iv. 2.

THE Sun is the most excellent and most glorious thing that we see in the world. It is the next cause, under God, of all the light that is in the air, and of all the life that any creature lives upon the earth. . . . Accordingly, whenever I think of my blessed Saviour, "the Sun of Righteousness," by the eye of faith, I behold Him in the highest heavens, there shining in glory and splendour infinitely greater than any mortal eye can bear. I behold him there, surrounded with an innumerable company of holy angels, as so many fixed stars, and of glorified saints, as planets enlightened by Him: all His satellites are servants waiting upon Him, ready upon all occasions to reflect and convey His benign influences, or favours, to His people upon earth! I see Him yonder by His own light. . . . In short, as the sun was made to rule and govern the day, so I behold the Sun of Righteousness governing His Church, and ordering all things, both within it and without it, so as to make them work together for the good of those who love God; till He hath brought them all to Himself to the highest heavens, where they shall, by His means, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father for ever.

Bishop Beveridge.

Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
  Christ, the true and only Light,
Sun of Righteousness arise,
  Triumph o'er the shades of night:
Day-spring, from on high be near;
  Day-star, in my heart appear.

SEPTEMBER 28.

"I will, be thou clean."—MARK i. 41.

WE do not more desire to be blessed than God does to hear us importune for blessing; and He weighs every sigh, and bottles up every tear, and records every prayer, and looks through the cloud with delight to see us upon our knees, and when He sees His time, His light breaks through it, and shines upon us. Only we must not make our accounts for God according to the course of the sun, but the measures of eternity. He measures us by our needs, and we must not measure Him by our impatience. "God is not slack, as some men count slackness," saith the Apostle; and we find it so, when we have waited long. All the elapsed time is no part of the tediousness; the trouble of it is passed with itself; and for the future, we know not how little it may be; for aught we know, we are already entered into the cloud that brings the blessing. However, pray till it comes; for we shall never miss to receive our desire, if it be holy, or innocent, and safe, or else we are sure of a great reward of our prayers.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

Oh! that I might so believe,
Steadfastly to Jesus cleave;
Only on His love rely,
Smile at the destroyer nigh:—
Free from sin and servile fear,
Have my Saviour ever near;
All His care rejoice to prove,
All His paradise of love!

SEPTEMBER 29.

St. Michael and All Angels.

"Michael and his angels fought against the dragon."—REV. xii. 7.

"TAKE heed," says Christ, "that ye offend not one of these little ones which believe in Me; for I say unto you, their angels always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven!" This is their peculiar office and employment; they are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." These are witnesses of our actions, and mourn over our faults. And shall we think highly of ourselves, when they are near? shall we despise our more ignorant brethren, while they think no scorn to watch over our welfare? Do these thoughts oppress and terrify you? I will tell you in the words of Christ Himself, how the angels may be made your friends. "Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child," that same is "one of those little ones" whom the angels of God's presence do not disdain to regard. Is any man desirous of power?—let him humble himself, and he shall be exalted. Does any man long for glory?—let him submit himself as a little child: and a white robe and a golden crown are prepared for him!—*Bishop Heber.*

How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skies, like flying pursuivant,
Against foul fiends to aid us militant!
They for us fight, they watch and duly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love, and nothing for reward:
Oh! why should heavenly God to man have such regard?

SEPTEMBER 30.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin."—
1 JOHN i. 7.

THERE is neither man nor woman that can say they have no sin; for we all have sinned. But how can we hide our sins? The blood of Jesus Christ hideth our sins, and washeth them away. And though one man had done all the world's sins since Adam's time, yet he may be remedied by the blood of Jesus Christ: if he believe in Him, he shall be cleansed from all his sins. Therefore, all our comfort is in Him, in His love and kindness. St. Peter saith, "Charity covereth the multitude of sins:" so doth indeed the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ: His love towards us covereth and taketh away all our sins; insomuch that the Almighty God shall not condemn us, nor the devil shall not prevail against us. Our nature is ever to hide sin, and to cloak it; but this is a wicked hiding, and this hiding will not serve. He seeth our wickedness, and He will punish it; therefore our hiding cannot serve us. But if you be disposed to hide your sins, I will tell you how you shall hide them. First, acknowledge them; and then believe in our Saviour Christ; put Him in trust with all; He will pacify His Father: "To that end He came into the world." . . . He saith not, "Blessed is he that did never sin," but, "Blessed is that man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sins."—*Bishop Latimer.*

Come, then, to this Physician,
His help He'll freely give;
He makes no hard condition,
'Tis only—look and live.

OCTOBER 1.

"And He said unto them, He that hath ears to hear let him hear."
—MARK iv. 9.

SHALL GOD speak to us, and shall not man hear? Shall we not say with Samuel, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth"? And yet how frequently do we turn a deaf ear to these admonitions! And though God speaks once, yea twice, yet we regard it not! Who is there that has not heard God speak to him by the voice of affliction, and the awakening dispensations of His providence, by the voice of His ministers, and the inspiration of His Holy Spirit? And yet all these admonitions have not been sufficient to work his reformation and amendment. Is there not a voice within us which either accuses or excuses us? which represents to us the reasonableness of a holy, just, and good life, and the folly and madness of being vicious and wicked, and what dangerous effects sin doth continually produce? And if so, how reasonable is it that we should hearken to this heavenly monitor! that we should weigh and consider what He dictates to us, and resolve to perform whatsoever we are assured will conduce to our truest interest both here and hereafter! Which that we may all do, God of His mercy grant for Jesus Christ His sake.

Bishop Atterbury.

Hark, my soul! it is the Lord,
'Tis thy Saviour, hear His word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee—
"Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?"

OCTOBER 2.

"Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"—1 Pet. iv. 18.

WHERE shall I appear? or where shall I hide myself? Who can deliver me out of the hands of God, or who will be my defence? Is there not One who is called the Angel of the Covenant?—the Saviour, and mighty deliverer? Upon His name will I cry aloud, Jesus! the blessed Jesus, this is He; the Judge at whom I tremble, but the Saviour in whom I trust. Look up then, sinner, and be comforted; look up, and sink not in despair! Flee to Him! Pour out your heart before Him, for He is thy hope; and cry aloud, persevere in prayer. O Jesus, by this most blessed Name, I beg that Thou wouldst deal with me according to its import. For His is a name full of love, full of delight, comfort, and holy confidence to every sinner that takes sanctuary in it. For what does Jesus signify but a Saviour? For thine own sake I implore Thee to be my Jesus indeed. Thou hast created me —destroy not then the work of Thine own hands! . . . Cast not away the purchase of Thy blood. Let Thy goodness, I beseech Thee, triumph over my wickedness! . . . Admit me, O Thou desire of my soul; receive Thy wandering sheep into Thy bosom; and make me to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting!—*St. Anselm.*

Rock of ages! cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flow'd,
Be of sin the double cure,
Save me from its guilt and power.

OCTOBER 3.

"When I awake up after Thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it."
—Ps. xvii. 16.

ART thou ambitious of nothing so much as to be like Jesus; and by all self-denying ways to obtain His glory? Dost thou spare no pains to suppress thy too eager desires for things on earth; to let out thy vain conceits; to sharpen thy appetite after real righteousness; to inflame thy love, to heighten thy desire and hope, to strengthen thy faith, to excite thy watchfulness, and engage thy serious endeavours that thou mayest possess the things above? Is the wisdom from above the crown of thy glory? humility thy honour? to do good thy riches and treasure? to be religious thy business? and to rejoice in God thy highest pleasure? Does the peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your heart and mind? Art thou above the contempt, hatred, oppression, enmities, of this evil world? above thine own and other men's passions and peevish affections, so that thou returnest good for evil, kindness for injuries, and prayers for curses? Is thy heart carried aloft in holy prayers? dost thou send up continually the sacrifice of praise, giving thanks to God for all His benefits? Is that sweet thing, that heavenly charity, thy dearly beloved, which is the very joy of heaven? Then the angels give thee joy of a happy resurrection and ascension with Christ Jesus.—*Bishop Patrick.*

O help us, Jesu! from on high;
We know no help but Thee:
O help us so to live and die,
As Thine in Heaven to be!

OCTOBER 4.

"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble."—Ps. xx. 1.

WHEN all things be in rest, and men be not in trouble, then they are forgetful of God commonly, and attribute too much to their own wisdom and diligence, as though they were the procurers of their own fortune, and workers of their own weal. But when the cross cometh, and that in such sort that their wits or friends cannot help; though the wicked despair, yet do the godly therein behold the presence, providence, and power of God. For the Scripture teacheth all things to come from God, weal and woe, and that the same should be looked upon as God's work. He it is that giveth peace; He it is that sendeth war; He giveth plenty and poverty; He setteth up and casteth down; His presence is everywhere; His power is the pillar whereby the godly stand, and to it they lean, as to the thing no less able to set up than to cast down. Lastly, therefore, drink the cup which Christ giveth. The fight is but short, the joy exceeding great; we must pray alway; then shall we be directed by God's Holy Spirit, which Christ hath promised. To Him be praise for ever. Amen.—*John Bradford.*

How rich, how sweet, how full of strength
  Our human spirits are,
Baptized into the sanctities
  Of suffering and of prayer.
Yes, heavenly wisdom, love divine,
  Breathed through the lips which said,
"O blessed are the hearts that mourn;
  They shall be comforted."

OCTOBER 5.

"In the time of trouble He shall hide me."—Ps. xxvii. 5.

JESUS exposed Himself to the fury of "the wind and tempest," that He might provide "a hiding-place and a covert" for us. Our hiding-place covers us from the power of the world. "In Me," saith our Saviour, "ye shall have peace; be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Helpless to resist the great enemy, our Lord brings us to His wounded side, and hides us there. We "overcome by the blood of the Lamb." To all accusations from every quarter, our challenge is ready, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" From the fear of death, our hiding-place still covers us: "Jesus through death hath destroyed him that had the power of death." Against the sting of this last enemy, a song of thanksgiving is put into our mouth:—"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus is "the smoking flax," which the malice of Satan strove to extinguish, not "quenched;" nor is "the bruised reed," which seems beyond the hope of restoration, "broken." Jesus is our *hiding-place.* Hidden springs of life are perpetually flowing from Him.—*C. Bridges.*

Dear name, the Rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding-place,
My never-failing treasury, fill'd
With boundless stores of grace.

OCTOBER 6.

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart, and will save such as be of a humble spirit."—Ps. xxxiv. 18.

It is related of the celebrated Bishop and Father Augustin, that being asked what was the first thing in religion? he answered "Humility." What was the second? "Humility." What was the third? "Humility." And his answer was true, in this sense, that humility prepares the heart for every other Christian virtue, and opens a door for the free admission of divine grace. As the waters stand in the lowest places of the valleys, so the gracious influences of the Spirit of God find their way soonest into the lowliest heart, and remain there the longest. God "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble," and thus fulfils, in the most effectual manner, the promise of His blessed Son, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." . . . He whom you serve, who had not where to lay His head, who was despised and rejected of men, and who ascended through suffering to glory, is waiting to receive you in His Father's house, to sit down with Him on His throne, even as He overcame the world by patience and meekness, and is set down with His Father on His throne.

Bishop Blomfield.

Give me, Lord, a contrite heart,
A heart that always looks to Thee:
Meek Redeemer! now impart
Thine own humility!

OCTOBER 7.

"Alway rejoicing."—2 COR. vi. 10.

IT is indeed good to have been afflicted, and there is a sadness that maketh the heart better; but joy and happiness are the gifts of God as well as sadness and affliction; nor are their influences less gracious or less wholesome. To have been innocently and thankfully happy—and no other happiness is worth naming—raises the spirit, brightens the mind, and above all softens the heart, and makes the man cordial and genial. It is not among those who carry about with them the memory of a happy family that you are to look for the advocate or the executor of harshness or intolerance; the milk of human kindness has been mingled with their blood, and they have a feeling for the joys and for the sorrows, for the virtues and for the faults, of their fellow-creatures. They know they have to do, not with abstract principles or mere machines, but with men of like passions with themselves; and having been trained in the luxury of doing good, they are to the last members one of another, and of the great brotherhood of mankind.

Dean R. Butler.

Rejoice, though storms assail thee;
  Rejoice when skies are bright;
Rejoice, though round thy pathway
  Is spread the gloom of night:
If the good hope be in thee
  That all at last is well,
Then let thy happy spirit
  With joyful feelings swell.

OCTOBER 8.

"The sorrow of the world worketh death."—2 COR. vii. 10.

WHEN our sorrow for sin centres itself mainly upon the painful or disgraceful consequences which have followed from it, rather than on the sin itself; when we grieve for the loss of health, or character, or opportunity, which it has brought in its train, rather than because it has been committed against God; and so when our sorrow is rather a flying from the punishment of sin than from the sin itself, it is like Saul's repentance under Samuel's stern and public reproof! He says, "I have sinned." There is, indeed, the admission of guilt, but it is a bare admission, and from it his eye glances instantly to the earthly consequences of sin. "I have sinned" is his cry, "yet honour me, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel;" and to see how much this *is* a betrayal of the hidden unsoundness of an unconverted heart, compare it with David's conduct under a like reproof. . . . Family suffering, the sword never departing from his house, shame before his people—all were as nothing compared with this one thought, "I have sinned against the Lord:" and so instead of seeking, with Saul, to have his sin concealed, his cry is, not, Release me from my sentence, but "Cleanse me from my sin." "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Bishop Wilberforce.

Welcome then each darker token;
  Mercy sent it from above!
So the heart, subdued, not broken,
  Bends in fear and melts with love.

OCTOBER 9.

"To love Him with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."—MARK xii. 33.

IF you love Christ, you love to do His will. Of all the proofs by which love to Christ is attested, obedience to His commands is the most decisive. It is that proof, without which every other attestation is insufficient to evince the reality of your love. . . . Obedience is that test, which tries the genuineness of every pretension, and distinguishes the sterling metal from every counterfeit. Obedience is the fruit, by which Christ Himself requires His people to evidence their love. If ye love Me, keep My commandments: ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Obedience is the fruit, by which if you love Christ, you evidence your love. Your obedience indeed is, at the best, defective and unprofitable; but it is sincere, it is cordial, it is universal. You search the Scriptures, that you may know the will of Christ. So far as you discover His will, you desire implicitly to perform it. Sin is your burden, your shame, your grief. Your earnest wish, your constant prayer, your daily endeavour, is to grow in grace, to be more and more conformed to the Image of God, in righteousness and true holiness.—*E. Cooper.*

Jesus hath wash'd away our sin,
  And we are children now:
Who feels such hope as this within,
  To evil cannot bow:
Rather with Christ all scorn endure,
  So we be like our Master, pure!

OCTOBER 10.

"The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light."
—MARK xii. 24.

As Nathan cometh to David after Beelzebub, so cometh accusing conscience after sin. Though this day be like yesterday, and to-morrow like to-day, yet one day will come for all, and then woe, woe, woe, and nothing but darkness. Thou God came not to Adam until the evening, yet He came; although the fire came not upon Sodom until evening, yet it came. And so comes the Judge, although He be not yet come. Though He have leaden feet, He hath iron hands. The arrow flieth and is not yet fallen, the pit is digged, the fire kindled, and all things made ready and prepared against the day: only the final sentence is to come, which will not long tarry. You may think to be like the thief that stealeth and is not seen. The Judge followeth thee at the heels, and nothing can be hid from Him; and therefore, whatsoever thou art, look about thee, and do nothing but that thou wouldst do openly, for all things are opened unto Him. They that will not come to the banquet must stand at the door. Sinners shall come like very sheep when the trumpet shall sound, and the heavens and earth shall come to judgment against them. The rocks shall cleave asunder, and the mountains shake, and the foundations of the earth shall tremble, and they shall say to the mountains, fall on us, and hide us from His wrath whom we have not ceased to offend.

Henry Smith.

Prepared the trumpet's call to greet,
Soldier of Jesus, stand!
Pilgrim of Christ, with ready feet
Await thy Lord's command.

OCTOBER 11.

"Not what I will, but what Thou wilt."—MARK xiv. 36.

FROM our blessed Lord's example, we learn what conduct we ought to observe when distress or misery overtake us. We are not only allowed but encouraged by what *He* did, to put up our petitions to the Throne of Grace for help in time of need. We are permitted to pray for the removal of our calamities with earnestness and fervour; we may implore the Almighty that the bitter cup of affliction may pass away from us; but the conclusion must always be (what His was), "Not my will, O my Father, but Thine be done." And one thing we may be assured of, that if the evils which overwhelm us are not removed, yet our supplications shall not be in vain; we shall at least be enabled to bear them. And though we must not expect to have an angel sent from heaven to support us, as was done to Jesus; yet we may expect, and expect with confidence, that a more than angelic Comforter, even the Spirit of God, will shed His healing influence over our souls, and preserve us from sinking, even under the severest trials.—*Bishop Porteus.*

"O Father! not My will, but Thine be done!"
So spake the Son.
Be this our charm, mellowing earth's ruder noise
Of griefs and joys,
That we may cling for ever to Thy breast
In perfect rest.

OCTOBER 12.

"And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly."—
LUKE xxii. 44.

Let us consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, such agony of body and soul. To gaze on the Great Sufferer must be for all hearts that are not utterly hard and dull to learn a higher unselfishness, a lower humility, a severer standard of Christian life. The love of Jesus reproduces itself in the lives of His working and suffering children. In some shape they are ever giving themselves for God and their fellow-men. True love is no thin disembodied sentiment. Love asserts its presence in a practical, visible way, when once it really lives. It is the very soul of all that earthly labour which for Christ's sake will be owned hereafter. . . . Only when we devote ourselves, according to our measure, to God's glory and to the enlightening, or cheering, or supporting our brethren, do we enter into the practical spirit of our Lord's death. Self-renouncement is the temper of which His death was the highest expression. "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again."

Archbishop Thompson.

Work! in the wild waste places,
  Though none Thy love may own;
God guides the down of the thistle
  The wand'ring wind hath sown,
Will Jesus chide Thy weakness,
  Or call thy labour vain?
The word that for Him thou bearest
  Shall return to Him again.

OCTOBER 13.

"My grace is sufficient for Thee."—2 COR. xii. 9.

THIS constitutes one of the main differences between the patience of an unconverted person, and the patience of a child of God. It is true, that persons apparently without grace, will bear great sufferings of body, and great afflictions in their temporal estate; but their patience is either simple resistance to the calamity, or it is resignation because they cannot resist; it is an unwilling, because a compulsory surrender. But it is not so with a believer. It is his privilege to submit, because the grace of God is sufficient for him. Yea, he glories in tribulation, because of the fruit which tribulation works. In all, he sees the hand of mercy, wisdom, and love; and his language is that of a tried servant of Christ: "Lord, while life is spared me, spare me no pain which Thou seest best for me." When a man of the world is laid low, Satan will leave him to himself; but when a child of God is under suffering, all the hosts of evil encamp against him. The conflict is intense between the power of grace, and the principalities and powers of evil. If grace is, as it always must be, victorious, then indeed are we more than conquerors. The battle is not ours, but the Lord's.

Dean Fremantle.

Father, my cup is full!
  My trembling soul I raise,
Oh, save me in this solemn hour,
  Thy might and love to praise.
Father, forsake me not,
  O Christ! I look to Thee,
And by Thy midnight agony
  Do Thou remember me.

OCTOBER 14.

"In peace, without spot, and blameless."—2 PET. iii. 14.

MY Brother, examine yourself, how far this character belongs to you. I do not ask whether it is complete in you; whether you never admit a thought contrary to humility, or to meekness, or to charity, or to purity, or to spirituality of mind; because, to the end, we shall have Satan to resist, and the world to overcome, and an evil nature to subdue; and even St. Paul did not count himself to have apprehended the prize of his high calling; "but kept under his body, and brought it into subjection, if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." I do not, therefore, inquire whether the Christian character is *perfected* in you, but whether it is *begun* in you? Are you poor in spirit; willing to receive "eternal life as the gift of God through Jesus Christ;" and desiring, like the Apostle, to be found in Him, not having your own "righteousness," but the "righteousness which is of God by faith"? If so, the effect of this faith is plain and visible, in the sight of men, for you are "meek and lowly of heart;" merciful in your actions, *pure* in thought and word and deed; desiring daily to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—*Bishop C. B. Sumner.*

Lord, we Thy presence seek;
May ours this blessing be;
Give us a pure and lowly heart,
A temple meet for Thee.

OCTOBER 15.

"Through the tender mercy of our God."—LUKE i. 78.

IF we look up to Heaven, we may there behold that bow which God has placed about the throne to remind us of that covenant of mercy which God has established with us and confirmed it with the blood of His only beloved Son. To the Lord our God belongs mercy, and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. And therefore it is observable that this bow has no string; it is not bent to execute God's vengeance upon us, but it is placed about the throne, as instruments of war used to be in times of peace amongst the Romans, for ornaments to their houses and the temples of their gods. It is a bow without an arrow, denoting to us that our blessed Saviour has appeased God's wrath, and taken away the sting of sin and death, and, as it were, disarmed God's justice; so that now every one who is reconciled to God through Christ, has no reason to fear "the arrows that fly by night, nor the pestilence that walketh at noonday."—*Bishop Atterbury.*

When tempest clouds are dark on high,
  His bow of love and peace
Shines beauteous in the vaulted sky,
  A pledge that storms shall cease.
Then keep we on, with hope unchill'd,
  By faith and not by sight,
And we shall own His word fulfill'd,
  At eve it shall be light!

OCTOBER 16.

"See that such as are in need and necessity have right."—
Ps. lxxxii. 3.

THE command of God to be merciful is most express and frequent; "If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him." (Deut. xv. 7.) In every description of the tempers God enjoins us to show to our fellow-creatures, mercy bears a very distinguished part. "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to *love mercy*, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah vi. 8.) In His estimate, "pure and undefiled religion," as it respects our fellow-creatures, "is to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction." Add to this that astonishing declaration of the Redeemer's regard to this excellent temper, even from His throne of judgment. He will reward every exercise of mercy as if it had been conferred on Himself: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." (Matt. xxv. 40.)

Henry Venn.

Yes, the sorrow and the suffering
  Which on every hand we see,
Channels are for tithes and offerings
  Due by solemn right to Thee.
Right of which we may not rob Thee;
  Debt we may not choose but pay,
Lest that face of love and pity
  Turn from us another day.

OCTOBER 17.

"And the people asked Him, saying, What shall we do then?"—LUKE iii. 10.

THE Apostle's rule, that if any man will not work, neither should he eat, extends to the rich as well as poor; only supposing that there are different kinds of work assigned to each. An easy fortune does not set men free from labour and industry in general, it only exempts them from some particular kind of labour. . . . . Happy that man who, unembarrassed by vulgar cares, master of himself, his time and fortune, expends his time in making himself wiser and his fortune in making others happier: who, as the will and understanding are the two ennobling faculties of the soul, thinks himself not complete until his understanding be beautified with knowledge as well as his will enriched with virtue. The greatest minister of state has not more business to do in a public capacity than he, and indeed every man else, may find in the retired and still scenes of life—in the pursuit of truth, the practice of virtue—in short, the service of that God, who giveth him all things richly to enjoy.

Jeremiah Seed.

O Father, who this earth assign'd
  Our place of toil to be,
Bind all within its one wide bound
  In one true charity.
A brotherhood of exiles here,
  We seek a home above,
Where Thou wilt gather in Thine own
  Who live in holy love.

OCTOBER 18.

St. Luke.

"Only Luke is with me."—2 TIM. iv. 11.

A MOVING and remarkable picture is presented to us here, of a good, and wise, and aged servant of God, in much natural agitation of mind under the burthen of captivity, desertion of friends, and approaching martyrdom, yet supported by Him for whom he was about to lay down his life, and by the love and service of a single follower. It is thus he complains how "all they of Asia were turned away from him;" how, "at his first answer, no man stood with him, but all forsook him:" and thus it is that he urges Timothy to do his diligence to come unto him, "because Demas had forsaken him, and Titus and Crescens were departed unto distant countries." But there is one friend whom he excepts from the charge of desertion, Luke, the beloved physician. Luke was with him still, his friend, his counsellor: he had been with him in the perils of his journey, in his bonds, in his shipwreck: and now, in his last fiery trial, Luke was still with him. He remained with St. Paul to the hour of his martyrdom, and afterwards preached the Gospel in many different and distant countries; and at last was put to death for his faith in Christ, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.—*Bishop Heber.*

But only Luke is with him now:—
Alas, that even the martyr's cell,
Heaven's very gate, should scope allow
For the false world's seducing spell!

OCTOBER 19.

"By love, serve one another."—GAL. v. 13.

TRUE love of man cannot exist without love of God, nor true love of God without love of man. Nor, again, can there be true love of God which does not keep His commandments. Who ever loved, and loved not the will of the object of that love? How much more, when He who is loved, is the Fountain of all good, whose will is the rule, and law, and the substance of all good? And "His commandments are not grievous." They are not grievous, because love makes them light; they are not grievous, because Christ gives strength to bear them up. . . . Wings are no weight to the bird which they lift up in the air until it is lost in the sky above us, and we see it no more, and hear only its note of thanks. God's commands are no weight to the soul which, through His Spirit, he upbears to Himself, nay, rather the soul, through them, and the more soars aloft, and loses itself in the love of God.—*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*

O Love, who lovest me for aye,
  Who for my soul dost ever plead;
O Love, who didst my ransom pay,
  Whose power sufficeth in my stead;
O Love, I give myself to Thee,
Thine ever, only Thine to be.

OCTOBER 20.

"The beam that is in thine own eye."—LUKE vi. 41.

How are you with respect to your own conscience of sin? Do you "perceive not the beam that is in your own eye?" Are you blind to your manifold offences? or do you humbly and contritely acknowledge that, whatever wickedness by the grace of God you may be enabled to avoid, still you have followed too much the devices and desires of your own heart, you have offended against God's holy laws, you have left undone those things which you ought to have done, you have done those things which you ought not to have done, and that there is no health in you? How are you with respect to your brother? Are you quick-sighted in "perceiving the mote that is in his eye," in prying into his faults—inferior perhaps to your own offences—in magnifying them, and bringing them out to notice? or do you tenderly throw over them the veil of Christian charity, and mete them with that measure which you would wish to be measured with yourself? Christian, as you value the blessing of God, your character as a follower of Christ, and your own salvation, refrain from a Pharisaical spirit:—be holy; be humble; be charitable. Such dispositions are the most infallible stamp of a true follower of Christ on earth.

Bishop Mant.

Let Thy mercy teach one brother
To forgive and love another;
That, copying Thy mercy here,
Thy goodness may hereafter rear
Our souls unto Thy glory, when
Our dust shall cease to be with men.

OCTOBER 21.

"He frankly forgave them both."—LUKE vii. 42.

LET us consider that we are all in the condition of one of these two debtors: that is, we have all offended God, and without His favour and goodness we are all undone. And truly, as we are in the condition of these debtors with respect to our obligations, so are we with regard to our ability; *we have nothing to pay.* This is a circumstance which ought to affect us very sensibly; that God knowing our inability, and that the very best of men have no merits of their own, whereby to satisfy for the debt they owe, He Himself found out a way for their redemption; He sent His only Son with terms of pardon, freely forgiving all such as with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Him, and accept the terms of their deliverance. And can we hear these words and not be exceedingly moved with their importance? Can a sinner hear of being frankly forgiven, and his heart not leap for joy? Can the greatest of sinners hear that there is the same mercy even for them, and not be surprised with love and gratitude? God would have the *love* of all His creatures: "Wherefore," He said, "her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much."

Bishop Wilson.

Give me to read my pardon seal'd,
And from Thy power to draw my strength;
To have Thy boundless love reveal'd
In all its height, and breadth, and length.

OCTOBER 22.

"Take heed therefore how ye hear."—LUKE viii. 18.

When the Word of God is read, the least that we can do is to attend, and to say with the infant Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Too many among us attend not with reverence, but with prejudice or prepossession. They are offended with one thing, and they animadvert on another; they first misunderstand, and then they object without knowledge and without reason. But, as with the works, so with the Word of God; much time and attention is required to understand both the one and the other. "Verily, Thou art a God that hidest Thyself," at least from hasty and irreverent observation. Clouds and darkness are indeed about the throne of God; but before the eyes of the patient and the pious inquirer, they will gradually vanish away, and the Sun of Righteousness will open upon us in all His glorious lustre. Take heed therefore how ye hear with prejudice and irreverence. . . . The spirit of pride, petulance, and prejudice, is the spirit, not of wisdom, but of folly; let us listen then with reverence, and the wisdom and mercy of God will every hour be more and more revealed, and we shall go from strength to strength in increasing knowledge and increasing piety.

Thomas Renell.

Read not this book in any case,
  But with a single eye;
Read not, but first desire God's grace
  To understand thereby.

OCTOBER 23.

"What ailed thee, O sea, that thou fleddest, and thou Jordan that thou wast driven back."—Ps. cxiv. 5.

How observant are all the creatures to the God that made them! How glorious a God do we serve! whom all the powers of the heavens and elements are willingly subject unto, and gladly take that nature which He pleases to give them. He could have made Jordan like some solid pavement of crystal for the Israelites' feet to have trod upon; but this work had not been so magnificent. Every strong blast congeals the water in a natural course; but for the river to stand still and run on heaps, and to be made a liquid wall for the passage of God's people, is for nature to run out of itself to do homage to the Creator. . . . The passages into our promised land are troublesome and perilous, which after all our hopes threaten to defeat us: for what will it avail to have passed a wilderness if the waves of Jordan should swallow us up? But the same Hand that made the way hard, hath made it sure;—He will master all difficulties for us; and those things which we most fear will He make most beneficial to us. O God, as we have trusted Thee with the beginning, so will we with the finishing of our glory.—*Bishop Hall.*

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side;
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee.

OCTOBER 24.

"Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath."—EPH. iv. 16.

ANGER is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God. So have I seen a lark rise from his bed of grass, singing as he rose, and hoping to get to heaven and climb above the clouds! but the poor bird was beaten back with the sighing of an east wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest than it could recover by the libration and weighing of his wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing as if it had learned music and motion from an angel as he passed through the air about his ministries here below. So is the prayer of a good man. Anger raised a tempest, and then his prayer was broken and his words went up towards a cloud:—and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose that prayer, and he must recover it when his anger is removed and his spirit is becalmed—made even as the brow of Jesus, and smooth like the heart of God. And then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the Holy Dove, and dwells with God, till it returns like the useful air laden with a blessing and the dew of heaven.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

O Thou, by whom we come to God!
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod:
Lord! teach us how to pray.

OCTOBER 25.

"Awake thou that sleepest."—EPH. v. 14.

ARISE thou that sleepest, whether it be in error, or in "sin." This sin is so pleasant that all the world lieth in it, and hardly can shake it off. King David fell into it, and continued in it, till at length Nathan the prophet, at the commandment of God, awakened him. Zaccheus slept a long time with heaps of evil-gotten goods under his head, till his eyes being opened to see the ugliness of his sin, he not only made restitution, but also gave the half of all his goods to the poor. . . . You that love the rest of your souls indeed, keep your souls waking, and do not suffer them to take rest. "Awake thou that sleepest," and takest rest: "stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." God would not have us to sleep unto death, but to awake unto life. Now is the time, now Christ calleth thee, now He stretcheth out His arms, now He offereth mercy; come unto Him, and thou shalt find true rest for thy wearied soul. Long hath been thy sleep, great hath been thy sin; but God is full of compassion. willing and ready not only to grant, but to offer pardon. Christ saith, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Archbishop Sandys.

Rise! for the day is passing,
  And you lie dreaming on;
The others have buckled their armour,
  And forth to the fight are gone:
A place in the ranks awaits you,
  Each man has some part to play;
The past and the future are nothing
  In the face of the stern to-day.

OCTOBER 26.

"Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."—
LUKE xii. 7.

WHAT a miserable world would this be had we no other view of the things which surround us, but as the effects of a chance! But we have not so learned the truth as it is in Jesus. We are satisfied, not only of a governing and superintending *Providence*, but of the wise and gracious direction of a heavenly *Father* in all our concerns. Nothing can be more insignificant and unimportant than a hair from our heads, and yet this shall not fall without His knowledge. Those trivial circumstances, which we call accidents, and conceive might have been otherwise, and which, had they been so, would have given a different complexion to every future circumstance of life, are not without His knowledge, His permission, or His wise appointment. To know Him, therefore, as our covenant God in Jesus Christ, secures all that a believer in his right mind can desire; for it secures the direction of all his concerns by *One* who cannot err; whose goodness is unbounded and unchangeable, and whose faithfulness is pledged for the bestowal of every blessing, through time into eternity, through grace to glory.—*Dean Goode.*

All things hang upon Thy will,
Thy dread counsel all fulfil;—
Root of all things which we see,
Which have been, or are to be.

OCTOBER 27.

"Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."—PHIL. i. 29.

WHEN the children of God take the resolution to suffer any affliction which God shall lay upon them, patiently and cheerfully, it must not be a sudden, a rash, an undebated resolution, but they must consider why they undertake it, and in whose strength they shall be able to do it. They must consider what they have done for God, before they promise themselves the glory of suffering for Him. When they which undertook the building of Babel did no more but say to one another, "Come let us make brick, go to, let us build a tower, whose top may reach to heaven," how quickly they were scattered over the earth! The way is, if you mind to build, "to sit down and count the cost." The king that intends a war, in the Gospel, takes counsel whether he is able with his ten thousand to meet the enemy with twenty thousand. We are too weak for our enemy; the world, the flesh, and the devil are mustered against us: but yet, with our ten thousand, we may meet their twenty thousand, if we have put on Christ, and be armed with Him and His holy patience and constancy.—*John Donne, D.D.*

Press forward and fear not; be strong in the Lord,
In the power of His promise, the truth of His word;
Through the sea and the desert our pathway may tend,
But He who hath saved us will save to the end.

OCTOBER 28.

St. Simon and St. Jude.

"Earnestly contend for the faith."—JUDE 3.

WE are to contend *earnestly;* that is, zealously and warmly, for the faith, in opposition to all coldness and indifference about it. "It is good," saith the Apostle, "to be zealously affected always in a good thing;" and we cannot be zealous in a better thing than in the faith of Christ. To be cool and indifferent here, is to be lukewarm and hypocritical; which, instead of pleasing Christ, will provoke Him to spue us out of His mouth. We are also to contend "earnestly"—that is, constantly and perseveringly—for the faith unto the end, in opposition to all weariness and apostasy: "We shall reap," saith the Apostle, "if we faint not;" but if we flag and grow weary of our work, we shall reap nothing but the barren fruits of our own folly. We must "fight the good fight of faith," and persist in it, before we can receive the crown; but if we let fall the combat, we may expect nothing but shame and disappointment. He that runs a race must hold out to the end, if he mean to win the prize; and we must "keep the faith," and continue so doing to the last, if we expect to "receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

Matthew Hole, D.D.

Come, labour on!
The toil is pleasant, the reward is sure,
Blessed are those who to the end endure;—
How full their joy, how deep their rest shall be,
O Lord, with Thee!

OCTOBER 29.

"Try me, and know my thoughts."—Ps. cxxxix. 23.

We have a known proverb among us, that when a beast hath his full load, one straw more will break his back. Many Christians have been a long time sinners against God, adding iniquity to iniquity, and some of you may have your full load. Oh! beware how you venture on the commission of another sin; though it be but a little and a slight sin, yet this slight and small sin, added to the rest, may sink you for ever into hell. After this small sin, you may neither have time to sin again, nor to repent you of your sins. . . . Every thought thou thinkest, and every word thou speakest, in an unregenerate state and condition, there is sin in it: and though possibly most of them are but little sins, yet they are able to sink you down to the lowest hell. It is a most certain truth, that, though the commission of the greatest sins be consistent with the truth of grace, yet so is not the approbation of the least sin. Oh! what a severe and critical thing is true holiness, that will no more allow the least transgression than the greatest. We have all of us need to pray with David, "Search me, O Lord, and try my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any evil way in me." O Lord, do Thou search and try us, and cast Thou out our corruptions, through Jesus Christ.

Bishop Hopkins.

My dying Saviour and my God,
Fountain for guilt and sin,
Sprinkle me ever with Thy blood,
And cleanse, and keep me clean!

OCTOBER 30.

"Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord his God."—Ps. cxlvi. 5.

THE union of the heart with God is made up by faith and love; but yet both these, in this our present condition of our absence and distance from God, do act themselves much by the third grace which is joined with them, and that is hope. Hope is the great stock of believers, it is that which upholds them under all the faintings and sorrows of this life, and in their goings through the valley and shadow of death. In the present discomfort and darkness of mind, and the saddest hours they meet with in this life, hope is that which keeps up the soul, and is that which David cheered up his soul with: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." (Ps. xlii. 5.) And what can trouble the soul that is thus established? There is only one thing that cruelly assaults it by the way, and that is the guilt of sin. All afflictions and troubles we meet with are not able to mar this hope or quench it; they cannot overcome it, for there is no affliction inconsistent with the love of God; but it is sin that presents Him as angry to the view of the soul.

Archbishop Leighton.

Sure, hope to heaven doth point us;
Our longings thither tend;
May short-lived toil ne'er daunt us
For joys that cannot end!

OCTOBER 31.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."
MATT. v. 8.

THE farthest that any of the philosophers went in the discovery of blessedness, was to pronounce that no man could be called blessed before his death; not that they had found what kind of better blessedness they went to after death, but that till death they were sure every man was subject to new miseries. The Christian philosophy goes farther; it shows a more perfect blessedness than they conceived for the next life, and it imparts that blessedness to this life also. The pure in heart are blessed already, not only comparatively that they are in a better way of blessedness than others are, but actually in present possession of it; for this world and the next are not to the pure in heart two homes, but two rooms—a gallery to pass through and a lodging to rest in—in the same house, which are both under one roof, Christ Jesus. So the joy, and the sense of salvation, which the pure in heart have here, is not a joy severed from the joy of heaven, but a joy that begins in us here, and continues and accompanies us thither, and there flows on and dilates itself on an infinite expansion.

John Donne, D.D.

Rivers to the ocean run,
  Nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun—
  Both speed them to their source:
So, a soul that's born of God
  Pants to view His glorious face;
Upwards tends to His abode,
  To rest in His embrace.

NOVEMBER 1.

All Saints.

"A great multitude, which no man could number."—REV. vii. 9.

BUT whence come they? from what favoured clime? from what pure and perfect doctrine and ritual, what golden age of the Church? They are "of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." O what a grasp of charity is there in this description! How it kindles a flame in the cold heart, and dilates the narrow bosom! They who have walked in the fulness of the light, and they who have felt their way by the glimmering of its outskirts, . . . they who have sat at the rich banquet of the bread of Life, and they who have gathered the stray crumbs which fell from the table:—from the Churchman who knew every book of his Bible and every doctrine deduced from it, to the poor savage who caught but some good word from the passing missionary. All nations, but no more nationalities; all kindreds, but no more exclusiveness; all tongues, but no more confusion. All the little streams of family affection, all the larger rivers of patriotism, shall have flowed into the unbounded ocean of heavenly love. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Dean Alford.

How bright those glorious spirits shine!
  Whence all their white array?
How came they to the blissful seats
  Of everlasting day?
Lo, these are they from sufferings great
  Who came to realms of light,
And in the blood of Christ have wash'd
  Their robes which shine so bright.

NOVEMBER 2.

"Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up."—COLOSS. ii. 18.

WISE Solomon says "the light is a pleasant thing;" and so certainly it is: but there is no true outward light which proceeds not from fire. The light of fire, then, is not more pleasing than the fire of light is dangerous. How foolish is the fly that, in a love and admiration of light, knows no distance, but puts itself heedlessly into the flame! How many approaches it made, every one nearer than the other, ere it made its last venture. And now that merciless fire, taking no notice of the affection of an over-fond client, hath suddenly consumed it. It is thus with those bold and busy spirits who will needs draw too near unto that inaccessible light and look into things too wonderful for them: so long do they hover about the secret counsels of the Almighty till the wings of their presumptuous conceits be scorched and their daring curiosity becomes repaid with everlasting destruction. O Lord, let me be blessed with the knowledge of what Thou hast revealed; let me content myself to endorse Thy Divine wisdom in what Thou hast not revealed: so let me enjoy Thy light that I may avoid Thy fire.—*Bishop Hall.*

"Let there be light" again command,
And light then in our hearts shall be;
We then through faith shall understand
Thy great mysterious Majesty;
And, by the shining of Thy grace,
Behold in Christ Thy glorious face.

NOVEMBER 3.

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."—ROM. xii. 15.

IT is the tendency and business of virtue and religion to procure, as much as may be, universal goodwill, trust, and friendship amongst mankind. If this could be brought to obtain; and each man enjoyed the happiness of others, as every one does that of a friend; and looked upon the success and prosperity of his neighbour, as every one does upon that of his children and family; it is too manifest to be insisted upon, how much the enjoyments of life would be increased. There would be so much happiness introduced into the world, without any deduction or inconvenience from it, in proportion as the precept of rejoicing with those who rejoice was universally obeyed. Our Saviour has owned this good affection as belonging to our nature, in the parable of the lost sheep; and does not think it to the disadvantage of a perfect state, to represent its happiness as capable of increase, from reflection upon that of others. But since, in man, compassion for the distress of others seems so necessarily connected with joy in their prosperity, there cannot be that delight or satisfaction without the inconveniences of compassion; but without considering this connection, there is no doubt that more good than evil, more delight than sorrow, arises from compassion itself.—*Bishop Butler.*

By sympathy's untutor'd voice,
Be taught her social laws to keep;
"Rejoice with them that do rejoice,
And weep with them that weep."

NOVEMBER 4.

"My cup runneth over."—Ps. xxiii. 5.

EVERY hour we live, every breath we draw, the food we eat, the raiment we wear, our rest by night, our peace by day, the sunshine we behold, the friends we enjoy, all proclaim to my soul the abundant goodness of our God, and constrain us each to say with David, "My cup runneth over." If the goodness of God be thus conspicuous in the natural world, how much more evident is it in the spiritual! Every believer in Christ Jesus, who reflects on the value of his soul, and the magnitude of the Gospel salvation, may confidently assert, "My cup runneth over." In the great Redeemer there is given to him a cup overflowing with spiritual blessings. "In Him are freely given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." Therefore the Apostle Paul exclaims, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Well then may every true Christian declare, "My cup rnnneth over.". . . Yea, whatever be my want, "my God shall supply all. my need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—*John Stevenson.*

My Shepherd will supply my need,
  Jehovah is His Name;
In pastures fresh He makes me feed,
  Beside the living stream;
The sure provisions of my God
  Attend me all my days;
O may Thy house be my abode,
  And all my works be praise!

NOVEMBER 5.

"The kingdom of God is nigh at hand."—LUKE xxi. 31.

LIKE as a stout and valiant soldier, when he must be up and fight with the enemies, oversleepeth not himself, but keepeth his standing, and hath his weapons and harness already upon him; so much more ought we Christians at all times to wait upon our heavenly Captain when He bloweth the trump, that we may be ready to pass forth with Him. "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding; that as soon as he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Happy are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find waking."—So, Christ exhorts every man at all times to prepare against His coming, when He knocketh through sickness or other dangers; when He calleth us out of this life; and when He shall come again to judge the living and the dead. The right preparation is *true faith*, fervent love and charity, the clear shine of all virtues, and specially a gentle willing mind to open unto the Lord, to let Him in and pass with Him into the Everlasting Kingdom.—*Bishop Coverdale.*

The dead in Christ shall first arise,
At the last trumpet's sounding,
Caught up to meet Him in the skies,
With joy their Lord surrounding:
No gloomy fears their souls dismay;
His presence sheds eternal day
On those prepared to meet Him.

NOVEMBER 6.

"And in my prosperity I said, I shall never be moved."—Ps. xxx. 6.

WE are all enjoying our good things, and apt enough to set our hearts on them, and to trust to their continuing with us; but I do not know that we all thank God for them, or acknowledge even in word that they come from His goodness. So in the boastful prayer of the Pharisee in the Gospel, who gloried that he was not as other men were, we share enough in his pride, and are inclined enough to think too well of ourselves; but I do not know that we should equally agree with him in thanking God as the author of our supposed superiority. And thus the words, both of that parable and of the text, do but condemn us more. Some fancy when they hear the word "prosperity" that it belongs only to great and high fortunes, and so think it does not apply to them. But indeed there is not one of us to whom it does not apply; for what seems in these times to be merely a common share of good fortune, in ancient times would have been deemed a rare prosperity. What was the land of milk and honey, even as promised to the Israelites, on the supposition of their obedience; what was the rest and what the blessings of Canaan, more than we enjoy every day, amidst all our sins and ingratitude?—*Thomas Arnold, D.D.*

But if ye should hold your peace,
Deem not that the song would cease—
Angels round His glory-throne,
Stars, His guiding hand that own,
Flowers, that grow beneath our feet,
Stones in earth's dark womb that rest,
High and low in choir shall meet,
Ere His name shall be unblest.

NOVEMBER 7.

"To the end He may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before God."—1 THESS. iii. 13.

A REALLY afflictive dispensation, which is intended for our good, is that in which there are little or no counterbalancing pleasures—that from which there appears no outlet, or a very distant one; for, in such cases, the only way left for the soul to find peace in, is to lie down in quietness. As in the taming of a wild beast, his struggles only bring upon him greater force and harder usage, but, when he yields, he is left to rest; so, while the soul is under the discipline of God, its shortest way to peace, according to the constitution of things, is to submit to the treatment which God sees necessary. Affliction by being accompanied with such circumstances as to leave us no alternative but to be patient or else miserable, has a most powerful tendency, through the agency of the Spirit, to reduce our rebellious tempers to a disposition which becomes creatures. This, then, is one use of tribulation—to make us come down from the place of God to that of creatures—to sink our haughty spirits into profound self-abasement upon earth, that, in Heaven, we may have no will left, but to do the will of God.—*Henry Martyn.*

These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy;
That thou may'st seek thy all in Me.

NOVEMBER 8.

"Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."—
1 THESS. iv. 14.

OH! the sweet and heavenly expression of our last rest, and the issue of our happy resuscitation, which our gracious Apostle hath laid forth, for the consolation of his mournful Thessalonians! *If we believe*, saith he, *that Jesus died and rose again.* So our belief is antidote enough against the worst of death. And why are we troubled with death, when we believe that Jesus died? and what a triumph is this over death, that the same Jesus who died, rose again! and what a comfort it is, that the same Jesus who arose, shall both come again, and bring all His with Him in glory! and lastly, what a strong cordial is this to all good hearts, that all those which die well, do sleep in Jesus! Thou thoughtest, perhaps, of sleeping in the bed of the grave; and there, indeed, is rest: but He tells thee of sleeping in the bosom of Jesus; and there is immortality and blessedness. O Blessed Jesu, *in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.* Who would desire to walk in the world, when he may sleep with Jesus?—*Bishop Hall.*

Death seemed all conquering when he bound
  The Lord of life in prison;
The might of death was nowhere found
  When Christ again was risen:
Wherefore praise Him night and day,
Him who took death's sting away!

NOVEMBER 9.

"Let us, who are of the day, be sober."—1 THESS. v. 8.

IF, when we see persons dancing, we stop our ears for an instant, so as to shut out the sound of the music, the movements which before seemed graceful and natural become at once nothing but ridiculous; and the dancers appear like persons bereft of reason, moving backwards and forwards without any apparent object. Even so, if we stop our ears for a moment to the perpetual din of the world which harmonizes so well with the occupation of its inhabitants; if we look calmly upon the various scenes that take place every day, how strange and unmeaning will the conduct of mankind appear! What words, what occupations, what pleasures for those who are on the way to eternal life or misery! and whose own behaviour every day is to determine which of the two will be their portion! For although the actual occupation in which men are engaged, is in itself often the very line of their duty; yet they may make it unworthy of an heir of immortality by the spirit with which they enter on it; while the humblest employment may be carried on with such a temper, that the angels themselves may behold us engaged in it with respect and love.—*Thomas Arnold, D.D.*

Heavenward stretch, my soul, thy wings;
  Heavenly nature canst thou claim;
There is nought of earthly things
  Worthy to be all thy aim;
Every soul that God inspires,
  Back to Him, its Source, aspires.

NOVEMBER 10.

"That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer,"—2 THESS. i. 5.

IF you so set your heart and mind upon Christ as to bear sweetly for His sake both great sorrows and little sadnesses, as certainly as He is true, you will have your reward in Heaven: as certainly as He is there, He will give it you Himself. For this is His word of promise: "Ye now have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." His daily tokens for good are such as these: when on first waking in the morning we turn our thoughts towards Him, accepting the new light as a sign of His presence, a ray from the brightness which is round His throne; when we turn with fear and loathing from the devil's suggestions; when we will not let hand or foot offend us, because Christ has made them members of Himself, and we hope on those very feet to follow Him through the gates of Heaven; when we try to feel in every company as those ought to feel who know more of harm of themselves than of any other person there; when instead of pleasing ourselves with the praise of men, we say in our hearts, "What would people think of us, if they knew all we know of ourselves?" These, and such as these, are His tokens on us for good: may He increase and multiply them.—*J. Keble.*

Then shall we see Thee as Thou art,
For ever fix'd in no unfruitful gaze,
But such as lifts the new-created heart,
Age after age, in worthier love and praise.

NOVEMBER 11.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life."—1 TIM. vi. 12.

A MAN that considers, and is convinced of any thing of moment that concerns himself, will have it much in his thoughts, and much at heart. Is it thus that Christians are convinced of the shortness and uncertainty of this present life? Is it thus that they are convinced of the reality of a life after death? It is plain they are not. Shall it be said, for instance, that men who make no scruple how they live, no conscience of their ways, who spend their lives in sin and vanity, who know they are sinners, and at enmity with God, and yet never think of making their peace by a timely repentance; can it be said with any truth, that such are *convinced* that they are in a very little time, perhaps ere this day twelve months, to die, and that from that moment, if they die in their sins, they are to be miserable for ever? Death is a very serious subject; nothing on earth ought to divert us from thinking of, and preparing for it; this we should often think of, lest the health we enjoy, and the seeming distance of entering upon eternity, should make us careless. "The night cometh, when no man can work."—*Bishop Wilson.*

Then since this world is vain
  And volatile and fleet,
Why should I lay up earthly joys,
Where rust corrupts, and moth destroys,
  And cares and sorrows eat?
    Why fly from ill
    With anxious skill,
When soon this hand will freeze, this throbbing heart lie
    still?

NOVEMBER 12.

"Pour out your heart before Him."—Ps. lxii. 8.

As the needy only can stoop to ask the relief of an alms, so then only can we begin to pray when we feel ourselves necessitous creatures; when we long to receive from God what we beg of Him, knowing that without the gift of it we must be miserable. What the Scripture defines to be prayer, is fully illustrated by the practice of the most approved servants of God. They were penetrated with a feeling of their necessities when they came before the throne of grace. "With my whole heart," says one, "have I sought thy favour:" another says, "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee." In the address of Daniel the greatly-beloved, every syllable breathes a sense of want which scarcely knows how to bear with denial or delay: "O Lord," says he, "hear, O Lord, forgive: O Lord, hearken and do, defer not for Thy Name's sake, O my God." . . . As soon as ever the guilt, and strength, and tyranny of sin are felt to oppress the soul, we shall flee to God, and prayers and cries, like incense, will ascend up before Him from the troubled and the humbled heart.

Henry Venn.

When prayer delights the least, then learn to say,
Soul, now is greatest need that thou shouldst pray.

NOVEMBER 13.

"To save sinners."—1 TIM. i. 15.

SURELY it is sweet to listen to this brief saying—"To save sinners!" To save those who had missed the mark, and come short as much of happiness as of holiness. To restore to peace with God those who had broken it by their sins. To knit again in a bond of tender affection, children who had left their Father's home, and were wasting His goods, in selfish misery, in a distant and desolate country. To make God known, and near, and present, in all His long-suffering, and in all His love, to those whose wretchedness it was to have lost sight of Him, and to have flung away all assurance of His concern for them, and of His will to bless. To take away the sting of death, and to bring life and immortality to light by His Gospel. Yes, and in order to this, to take our sins upon Him, and by dying, to make propitiation for iniquity. Christ the sacrifice—the sacrifice not to wrath, but of love—the gift given out of boundless compassion by Him who so loved us that He spared not His own Son from dying on our behalf, so making peace—Christ the sacrifice of the Father's love, must go before Christ the Resurrection, the Mediator, and the Life.—*J. Vaughan, D.D.*

Jesus! Thy name I love,
All other names above,
Jesus my Lord!
Oh! Thou art all to me,
Nothing to please I see,
Nothing apart from Thee,
Jesus my Lord!

NOVEMBER 14.

"He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."—JOHN vi. 35.

WE must have—the noblest and meanest alike—constant correspondence with the Author of that good which we cannot create . . . And this it is which we mean by the dependence of the Christian soul on its God. It is a perpetual converse with the High and Holy One, who is by that converse changing the soul more and more into His own likeness. It is a power of coming to Him at all times of need, and finding the very grace required for each conflict or distress. It is the privilege of admission to a presence chamber where the golden sceptre is always held out, and no prayer sent back unanswered and unobserved. Feelings and aspirations go up from the child of God perpetually to his Father in Heaven, to be blessed with returns of grace that quicken those feelings into a new and still more blessed energy of love. But especially in acts of sacramental communion with his Lord does the Christian gather up and consecrate the powers of his life-long communion with Heaven. Then it is that he has most vivid impressions of the nearness of God to his soul, a most comfortable assurance of strength for his need.—*J. J. Mackarness.*

Bend not thy light-desiring eyes below,
  There thy own shadow waits upon thee ever;
But raise thy looks to Heaven, and lo!
  The shadeless sun rewards thy weak endeavour.
Who sees the dark, is dark; but turn towards the light,
And thou becom'st like that which fills thy sight.

NOVEMBER 15.

"If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."—JOHN vii. 17.

EXCELLENCE is here embodied, and presented to our view; an excellence not visionary, but real; not human, but divine; not to be admired, but to be adored. Christ is, indeed, our perfect pattern, but He is also our instructor, our guardian, our guide, our king, and our God. He not only exhibits virtue, but inspires it. He at once teaches goodness, and makes us good. "As many as receive Him, to them giveth He power to become the sons of God." In other studies and pursuits we are left, comparatively, to the exercise and improvement of our natural powers. But in the study and imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall receive, in exact proportion to our humility, diligence, watchfulness, and prayer, the special influence of God's Spirit, in such measure and degree as are suited to our wants and capacities; and accompanied with such omnipotent efficacy, that "beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Bishop Jebb.

To Thee, meek Majesty, soft King
  Of simple graces and sweet loves!
Each of us his lamb will bring,
  Each his pair of silver doves!
At last, in fire of Thy fair eyes,
  Ourselves become our own best sacrifice!

NOVEMBER 16.

"Your life is hid with Christ in God."—COL. iii. 3.

WHAT trouble can overwhelm, what fear can discompose that man who loveth Christ and keepeth His words? What earthly power can make such a man unhappy? Will you take away his riches? his treasure is in heaven. Will you banish him from home? his country is above. Will you bind him in chains? his conscience, his spirit, his affections, are all free. Will you destroy his body? his body shall be raised incorruptible at the last day, and his soul will immediately return to God. Heaven itself is but an emblem of his happiness: as heaven is enlightened by the rising sun, his soul is enlightened by the Sun of righteousness, which riseth, without setting, in his heart. As heaven is intrinsically bright and beautiful, though clouds obscure, and midnight darkness surround it, so he is peaceful, happy, and serene in the midst of trials and afflictions. As heaven is exalted above the storms and tempests of this lower atmosphere, he is exalted above the distractions of this troublesome world. He is a Christian. His conversation is in heaven. His life is hid with Christ in God.—*St. Chrysostom.**

Whether I fly with angels, fall with dust,
  Thy Hands made both, and I am there;
Thy power and love, Thy love and trust,
  Make one place every where.

* Translated by Bishop Mant.

NOVEMBER 17.

"Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God."—ROM. xiv. 22.

CHRISTIANITY is a heavenly thing; the life of God in the soul of man; a new creation; the reduction of a wayward fallen creature to the obedience of his Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; the love of God again becomes, as in Adam at his first creation, the master affection of the soul. This spirit of Christianity is lowliness of heart; its life is hid with Christ in God; its joys and conflicts are unknown to the world. its fellowship is with the Father through the Son, and by the grace of the Holy Ghost; its fruits are bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness long-suffering; its centre, devotion; its hope, heaven. The Christian goes forth from his closet to the duties of life with "fear and trembling:" he knows the difficulty of preserving the inward power of grace . . . he knows the snares of Satan, and the "enticing words" of human wisdom; he knows that a man may be a theologian, a controversialist, a preacher, a partisan, a *professor* of the purest form of religion, without being a mature Christian. He is glad therefore to return to privacy, to his Bible, his Saviour, the study of his own heart, prayer, confession, and praise.—*Bishop Daniel Wilson.*

A moment from this outward life
Its service, self-denial, strife,
I joyfully retreat.
My soul, through intercourse with Thee,
Strengthen'd, refresh'd, and calm'd shall be,
Its scenes again to meet.

NOVEMBER 18.

"No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."—JOHN x. 18.

A GENTLE unmurmuring submissiveness is the Christian's brightest heroism: therefore did our Saviour, in His own person, adopt the way that leads to it. . . . It was the humiliation of a God to take our nature at all; it was the humiliation of a man to crucify that nature daily. He knew, what sages had failed to see, that it was loftiest when lowest; that as it sank in humbleness, it rose in glory. And thus, the model of all He taught, Himself "the first born from the dead," He soared to Heaven with a spirit lowly as the grave He left; thus beats there, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, a human heart —the heart of an enthroned King—more softly subdued to mercy, more meekly patient, than ever sorrowed among the loneliest solitudes of earthly affliction! . . . Thus the leader bore His daily cross. Let us delight to copy His act. If through the cross, not justifying alone, but sanctifying also, we must be cleansed unto meetness for the Kingdom, may we welcome the cross, yea, pray that it may come, and clasp it joyfully when it comes!

Archer Butler.

Ah! would that I could share
Thy cross, Thy bitter woes!
All true delight lies hidden there,
Thence all true comfort flows.
Ah! well were it for me
Could I here end my strife,
And die upon the cross with Thee,
Who art my Life of life!

NOVEMBER 19.

"I am the Resurrection and the Life."—JOHN xi. 25.

THESE are Thy magnificent titles, Captain of our Salvation! And therefore we commit to Thee body and soul; for Thou hast redeemed both, and Thou wilt advance both to the noblest and most splendid of portions. Who quails and shrinks, scared by the despotism of death? Who among you fears the dashing of those cold black waters which roll between us and the promised land?—"I heard a voice from heaven"—Oh for the angels' tongue that words so beautiful might have all their melodiousness!—"saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." It is yet but a little while, and we shall be delivered from the burden and the conflict, and, with all those who have preceded us in the righteous struggle, enjoy the deep raptures of a Mediator's presence. Then, reunited to the friends with whom we took sweet counsel upon earth, we shall recount our toil only to heighten our ecstasy, and call to mind the tug and the din of war, only that, with a more bounding throb, and a richer song, we may feel and celebrate the wonders of redemption.—*Canon Melvill.*

Hail, eternal hope on high!
Hail, Thou King of victory
Hail, Thou Prince of life adored!
Help and save us, gracious Lord!

NOVEMBER 20.

"They loved the praise of men."—JOHN xii. 43.

THE love of praise, when it is discreet and moderate, is always attended with emulation and a strong desire of excelling: and so long as we can stop here, there is no harm done to ourselves or others; but emulation easily and insensibly degenerates into envy and censoriousness. The world, with all its faults, is seldom so bad as to applaud vices; and St. Paul exhorts Christians to follow not only whatsoever things are right, but whatsoever things are of good report. The love of reputation, therefore, will scarcely of itself lead us to immoral actions. Yet the things which the world usually admires and praises most, are not things in their own nature the most valuable; they are those bright abilities and fair endowments which are exercised about temporal objects; which relate to the present life and terminate with it. Christian virtues are of a more silent, modest, and retired nature. God and good angels approve them; but the busy world overlooks them. So that he who principally affects popular approbation, runs some danger of living and dying well known to others, and little known to himself; ignorant of the state of his soul, and forgetful of the account which he has to render up to God.

John Jortin, D.D.

Before the eyes of men, let duly shine thy light,
But ever let thy life's best part be out of sight.

NOVEMBER 21.

"Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."—ROM. xiii. 12.

THE consideration of the shortness and uncertainty of our lives, should make us contented with our present condition, and patient under all the evils and afflictions which may befall us in this world. A little may content us for a little while, for the short time of our abode here; and since we do not expect our rest and happiness in this world, we cannot think ourselves disappointed if we do not meet with it. If our condition be tolerable, it is well, and we have reason to be contented with it, since it is as much as this world usually affords. If it be very mean and strait, it cannot last long; and even that consideration should silence our murmurings, and should check our discontent.—The meditation of death and of the consequences of it, should make us upright and sincere in all our words and actions. Hypocrisy and dissimulation are no part of true wisdom even as to this world. But in regard to the other world, all disguises and acts of deceit are perfect folly. "Beware," says our Saviour, "of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is *hypocrisy;* for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; nor hid, that shall not be known."—*Archbishop Tillotson.*

Not many lives, but only one have we—
Frail, fleeting man!
How sacred should that one life ever be—
That narrow span!
Day after day fill'd up with blissful toil;
Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil!

NOVEMBER 22.

"In hope of eternal life."—TITUS i. 2.

FOR the vicious, old age hath no comfort and much terror. There have been few things in their past lives, that can give them pleasure when reflected on; and many, that must give them inexpressible concern. For the proper satisfactions of their present condition, they have never learnt to have any relish; and the thoughts of their approaching one it is hard for them to avoid, still harder to support. A most dreadful dilemma:—to be weary of this life, yet afraid of the next; and the strongest fears to fall infinitely short of what there is to be feared. But, to the aged pious Christian, the consideration of hereafter almost annihilates every thing that could disquiet him here. He will never regret that he is no longer qualified for worldly enjoyment, when he thinks of the unspeakable bliss that he knows is at hand; nor faint under worldly afflictions, "which are but for a moment," since they are "working out for him," so soon, "eternal glory." "Though his outward man perish," his inward man is renewed day by day;" and when his flesh and his heart faileth, he triumphs in the declaration, that "God is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever."—*Archbishop Secker.*

When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond our cage,
And long to fly away.

NOVEMBER 23.

"Cease to do evil."—ISA. i. 14.

How much ought we to admire the profound wisdom of our Divine Legislator, who, willing to guide us in the paths of virtue, shows us that the first step towards learning to do well, is to "cease to do evil." Had He begun by exhorting us to perfection, we should scarcely have had the courage even to make the attempt; but in proposing to us what is of comparatively easy execution, He tries our strength by degrees. It is with piety as with the mysterious ladder that was exhibited to the patriarch Jacob, the foot of which rested on the earth, but the summit reached the skies; it is only by degrees that we can ascend, but it is by degrees that we can finally arrive at the highest elevation of which our nature is capable. The first step we take in mounting a ladder is that which disengages our foot from the earth; so, in the scale of religion, the first step towards the attainment of good is the estranging ourselves from the practice of evil. . . . If you know how to search the Scriptures for the help they offer you, you will have the illumination of the Holy Spirit to enlighten you; that is to say, you will draw your light from the source of light itself.—*St. Basil.*

Led on by Thee, I'll keep the road
That leads to Thy divine abode;
Where in Thy presence fully blest,
The just made perfect ever rest.

NOVEMBER 24.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits."—Ps. cxvi. 12.

DAVID, falling into consideration of the infinite mercies of God, bursts out into these careful words:—"I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." Perhaps the prophet had more care to show himself thankful towards God, by reason of the grief which he himself sustained through men's ingratitude to him. He makes complaint that his familiar friends, who ate bread at his table, who took sweet counsel with him, whom he had many ways benefited, were unthankful and requited him with treachery. An honest-hearted man is never so grieved as when his friendliness is requited with ingratitude. "If it be," saith St. Ambrose, "a fault to be matched even with murder not to requite man with thankfulness, what a crime is it to deal unthankfully with God!" *—Lycurgus, being asked why in his laws he had set down no punishment for ingratitude, answered, "I have left it to the gods to punish." The ingratitude of Jerusalem did more wound the heart of Christ Jesus than the spear that pierced Him through the heart. He hath dealt as mercifully with us as with them. Let us take "the cup of salvation" and "be thankful."—*Archbishop Sandys.*

Wherefore I cry, and cry again;
And in no quiet canst Thou be,
Till I a thankful heart obtain
Of Thee.

* "Dixeris maledicta cuncta, cum ingratum hominen dixeris." Pub. Syr. v. 250.

NOVEMBER 25.

"Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience."—
1 TIM. iii. 9.

CHRIST hath shown us that we may, as men, and in the things of men, truly serve the Lord our God. So that now all things are full of Him: domestic blessings, family affections, and the joys of the homestead—these are now holy things; for they were seen in Him who knew no sin. The joys of earthly friendship and its tears—in these our Master went before us; in these God may be honoured. In doing good to men, in fulfilling worthily our part in this world, we may, through his grace, be doing that which Jesus did. So that life has again become a great reality to those that trust in Him. For this is the true character of our redeemed life—the bringing into every part of it the blessed presence of a reconciled Father. It is not to consist in a sour refusal of the blessings which He gives us—in wearing a sad and solemn countenance, when His earth is rejoicing around us. It is not to be shown by our putting on the garb of an unnatural and unkindly separation from our fellows; but in receiving all from Him, as our justification, our peace, our righteousness; and then going forth to serve Him simply in our daily tasks, to honour Him with grateful thoughts, and to see His perpetual presence in everything around us.

Bishop Wilberforce.

Teach me to live! with kindly words for all,
Wearing no cold, repulsive brow of gloom;
Waiting with cheerful patience, till Thy call
Summons my spirit to her heavenly home.

NOVEMBER 26.

"In that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."—HEB. ii. 18.

"No man, whilst he liveth in this body, can live without temptation." Satan sleepeth not, but is busy to tempt. But we may be of good courage; our Joshua goeth in and out before us. He was tempted, that we might not think much to endure temptation; He overcame temptation, that in Him we might have power likewise to overcome. The tempter came unto Him, not once, or twice, but the third time, to show that our temptations are many; but how many soever they are, we have these comforts: first, that Christ hath subdued the force of the enemy; second, that He taketh compassion upon the tempted, having Himself endured temptation; third, that from henceforth He will overcome, in His members, him whom He overcame in His own person, being the Head of the body. Wherefore, as Moses said unto the people, "Dread not, nor be afraid, for your God fighteth for you," so may it be said unto every Christian whose armour is the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, whose battle is temptation, whose grand Captain is Christ Jesus our Saviour, whose conquest is an immortal crown of everlasting glory—Be of good courage, the Lord of heaven and earth is with thee in the conflict.—*Christopher Sutton.*

Thou from whose cross in anguish burst
The cry that own'd Thy dying thirst,
To Thee we turn, our Last and First,
Our Sun, and soothing Moon.

NOVEMBER 27.

"Whose house we are, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."—HEB. iii. 6.

IF religion be a practical thing, it must depend, not upon beautiful thoughts, but upon matter-of-fact certainties. Its truths must come to us in a form in which we can carry them with us, and bring them to bear upon our motives in the hour of temptation. When tempted we need something solid to fall back upon; not a picture, not a mist, not a view, not an hypothesis, but a fact. For eighteen centuries Christianity has responded to this supreme necessity of the soul of man. . . . While all around her is change and uncertainty, faith gazes unfalteringly upon the unseen and the eternal. She knows that for the object on which her eye is fixed, all else, if need be, may well be sacrificed, since all else will one day pass away. She knows that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—*Canon Liddon.*

Thine for ever! O how bless'd
They who find in Thee their rest!
Saviour, Guardian, heavenly Friend,
O defend us to the end.

Thine for ever! Thou our Guide,
All our wants by Thee supplied,
All our sins by Thee forgiven,
Lead us, Lord, from earth to Heaven.

NOVEMBER 28.

"My Father and your Father."—JOHN xx. 17.

WE call God "Father" because He beareth a loving and fatherly heart towards us. It is a sweet word, "Father;" and a word that pleaseth God much when it is spoken with a faithful heart, which above all things God requireth. This word "Father" moveth God's affection, in a manner, towards us, so that He, hearing the word "Father," cannot choose but show Himself a Father indeed. Further, in that we call Him "Father," His will and fatherly affections are expressed: that we call Him "heavenly Father," His might and power, His omnipotency, are expounded unto us. So that you perceive that He is both loving and kind towards us; that He beareth a good will, and also is able to defend us from all our enemies, spiritual and temporal. Therefore let us put our trust and confidence in Him: let us not despair of His help, seeing He is so loving, kind, and gentle towards us; and so mighty, that He hath all things in His hands.—*Bishop Latimer.*

"Our Father," covenant and sacred Name,
Pledge of the dearest privilege we claim,
The right of children, venturing near Thee—
Children in Christ, of Thine own family:
Thy truth, Thy tenderness we turn to prove,
Like little ones around the parent knee,
Clinging in perfect confidence and love.

NOVEMBER 29.

"Look unto Me, and be ye saved."—ISA. xlv. 22.

To be saved is to be delivered in this present life from the guilt of sin, by faith in Jesus Christ the Saviour. Whosoever with his heart believes on the Lord Jesus is a saved soul. He shall not perish; he shall have eternal life. This is the first part of salvation, and the root of all the rest. To be saved is to be delivered from the *power* of *sin*, by being "born again" and sanctified by Christ's Spirit. It is to be freed from the hateful dominion of sin, the world, and the devil, by having a new nature put in us by the Holy Ghost. Whosoever is thus renewed in the spirit of his mind, and converted, is a saved soul. This is the second part of salvation. To be saved is to be delivered in the day of judgment from all the *awful consequences of sin.* It is to be owned and confessed by Christ as one of His dear children and servants. It is to be pronounced free from the portion of the wicked—the worm that never dies, the fire that is not quenched. It is to receive the reward prepared for the righteous—the glorious body—the kingdom that is incorruptible—the crown that fadeth not away, and the joy that is for evermore. This is *complete salvation.—J. C. Ryle.*

Cling to the Crucified!
His death is life to thee—
Life for eternity.
His pains thy pardon seal;
His stripes thy bruises heal;
His cross proclaims thy peace,
Bids every sorrow cease;

NOVEMBER 30.

St. Andrew.

"I will make you fishers of men."—MATT. iv. 19.

How noble an employment is that of the Christian ministry! Man is the highest and noblest of all God's visible works: his reasonable soul would give him this pre-eminence, even were it not immortal: much more being, as it is, created to a never-ending existence. Honour, indeed, is due to every honest or useful calling, in which men employ the talents which God has given them to His glory and the good of their fellow-creatures; but in proportion as its end is more important, and its usefulness greater, so much the more honourable does any calling become. Of all mere earthly callings a statesman's is the most noble, because it relates most immediately to the welfare of God's noblest visible creature; but the Christian minister's high and holy business is to advance the welfare of the human soul, viewed not merely as a moral agent upon earth, but as an immortal and responsible creature of God, estranged from him by the sinful nature he inherits, and having a day of grace allowed, in which alone he can be reconciled to his offended Maker. Who can appreciate the glory and importance of such a calling as this, to reconcile man's soul to God? How little do all other engagements appear when compared to it; and what zeal and reliance on Divine Grace should be found in all those who are called to it!—*Bishop Trower.*

And wheresoe'er in earth's wide field
Ye lift for Him the red cross shield.
Be this your song, your joy, and pride—
"Our Champion went before, and died."

DECEMBER 1.

"I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh."—ACTS ii. 17.

"I WILL send to thee," says the Lord Jesus, "the spirit of the Paraclete, to give thee the pledge of salvation, the strength of life, the light of knowledge. The pledge of salvation, that the Spirit Himself may bear witness to thy spirit, that thou art a son of God; the strength of life, that what is naturally impossible to thee, may, by His grace, become not only possible, but easy; the light of knowledge, that when thou hast done all, thou mayest think thyself an unprofitable servant, and ascribe whatever good thou findest in thyself to Him from whom comes all good. So, then, this spirit in these three respects shall teach thee all things—that is, all things that pertain to thy salvation—because in them is full and complete perfection." . . . O hard, hardened, obdurate sons of Adam, who are not softened by such great benignity, such a flame, such a mighty fire of love! . . . What then does He ask of thee who has sought thee with so much carefulness, but that thou shouldest walk carefully with thy God? Such careful walking is produced only by the Holy Spirit, who searches the depths of our bosoms, "discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart."—*St. Bernard.*

Return, oh Holy Dove, return!
  Sweet messenger of rest:
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn
  And drove Thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
  Whate'er that idol be?
Help me to tear it from Thy Throne
  And worship only Thee.

DECEMBER 2.

"Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."—ACTS iii. 19.

THE Gospel is the glory of Jehovah's holiness. It displays His thoughts of sin in a manner that casts every other revelation of them, however terrible, into the shade. Angels must have stood in silent amazement, and adoring awe, when they saw their fellows cast out for it from bliss for ever. They saw man, for the same cause, cast out of paradise, groaning under his Maker's curse; and a world once beautiful and happy turned into a scene of desolation and death. . . . Were there no relentings? was there no allowance for sin? Brethren, the groans and blood of a dying Saviour—that cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—may answer this inquiry. "He spared not His own soul!" yea, and that holy sufferer Himself demanded the vengeance, rather than sin should go unpunished. Here, then, in the Gospel, here *only*, you learn to the full extent, what is the holy abhorrence, in the divine nature, of everything that is contrary to its own excellence.

Dean Goode.

Behold the Lamb of God!
Into the sacred flood
Of thy most precious blood
My soul I cast:
Wash me, and make me clean within,
And keep me pure from every sin,
Till life be past.

DECEMBER 3.

"Therefore will I give thanks unto Thee."—Ps. xviii. 49.

PRAISE is the expression of grateful love, enumerating the perfections of God, and recapitulating the blessings received from Him. "I will love Thee, O Lord my strength," David begins the eighteenth psalm; and then, after rehearsing in that beautiful hymn the deliverance which God had wrought for him, concludes—"therefore will I give thanks unto Thee O Lord, among the heathen, and sing praises unto Thy name." But if man speaks to God in prayer and praise, God speaks to man in His Word; and therefore he who loves God, delights to study His Scriptures. It is listening to the voice of a friend; but a friend whose love is far beyond that of human friendship. He listens with solemn attention. As the blessed Virgin once—because he loves, even while he reveres—he "keeps all these sayings in his heart." The reproofs, the warnings, the examples, the precepts, the promises revealed, it is at once his duty and delight to study. "Oh! how I love Thy law," said David; "it is my meditation all the day." How sweet are Thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"—*Bishop Jackson.*

Praise the God of our salvation,
  Hosts on high His power proclaim;
Heaven and earth, and all creation,
  Laud and magnify His Name!

DECEMBER 4.

"Draw near with a true heart."—HEB. x. 22.

LET us not forget, that to give a good example is not our chief, far less our only reason, for attending public ordinances. If we allowed it to be supposed that our attendance was only, or chiefly, given for the sake of example, the spiritual benefit derivable by our neighbour would be at an end. . . . Men seldom frequent the market-place, or the exchange, merely as mutual examples; their object is to advance their worldly interests. And in like manner we are expected to frequent the house of God, with a view to "treasure in heaven," and to promote the common salvation of our souls. Our Blessed Master has declared, that if "any two" of His followers shall agree touching any thing they ask in His name, it shall be done for them of His Father which is in heaven. . . . And if, throughout the length and breadth of this Christian land, the great body of our people were to assemble Sunday after Sunday to pay their sacrifices of prayer and praise in the devout and humble spirit of our Liturgy, it would be difficult to express or imagine the fulness of the blessings which God would assuredly pour forth upon us.

Archdeacon Sinclair.

Behold us, Lord, before Thy throne;
Inspire, and make our hearts Thine own;
Bind to Thy Cross our wandering will,
Each act with holy purpose fill;
Our weakness, let Thy strength defend,
Thou, Author of our faith, and End.

DECEMBER 5.

"These all died in faith."—HEB. xi. 13.

How was God glorified in these? and how is God glorified in us when we truly serve Him? To this end, Christ willed His disciples that their light should shine before men; and St. Peter exhorteth, that by our good works we "glorify God in the day of visitation:" in effect, that we honour Christ by our Christian behaviour, "which," saith St. Cyprian, "is to do the will of God, which will is, that we have steadfastness in faith, modesty in words, uprightness in action, in works, mercy; in manners, discipline and peace towards our brethren." Ought not our uprightness to be inwardly, because it is unto God; and outwardly, because it is unto the glory of God? "By this," saith our Saviour, "shall men know that ye are My disciples." Every general in the field hath his colours, whereby he and his company are known; Love is Christ's banner, under which we all train and keep a seemly Christian march, following Christ our captain and "finisher of our faith." Our enemies are the assaults of sin and Satan; our weapons are "the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit;" our conquest, "a crown of righteousness."

Christopher Sutton.

But He our life hath left unto us free,
Free that was thrall, and blessed that was bann'd;
Nor aught demands but that we loving be,
As He Himself hath loved us aforehand,
And bound thereto with an eternal band,
Him first to love that was so dearly bought
And next our brethren to His image wrought.

DECEMBER 6.

"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God."—HEB. xii. 15.

BE industrious in religion. We can tolerate indolence anywhere rather than here—here where an eternity is at stake, here where an hour's sluggishness may be fatal. We have no respect, indeed, for the indolent man, let his indolence show itself in what form it will; one of your idlers who sleeps away life, shunning all exertion, doing listlessly what he is compelled to do, and only pleased when he can be left undisturbed, hardly deserves the name of man. Man's characteristic is restlessness; restlessness foretells his immortality; and a sluggard, by his apathy, seems to destroy the mark, and silence the prophecy. But if confined to other things, indolence may not be absolutely fatal; the indolent man may have wealth, which secures him against want; and by the occasional exercise of rare talents, he may even attain to some measure of distinction. But an indolent Christian—it is a sort of contradiction. Christianity is industry spiritualized. The sluggard in religion would be the sluggard in escaping from the burning house, or the sinking ship.—*Canon Melvill.*

Awake my soul, and with the sun,
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and early rise
To pay thy morning sacrifice.
Redeem thy mis-spent moments past,
And live this day as if the last;
Thy talents to improve take care;
For the great day thyself prepare.

DECEMBER 7.

"Happy is the man that feareth always."—PROV. xxviii. 14.

THIS is a text often misunderstood, but truly it is a blessed verse. It is among the divine sayings left us by the Spirit as good for all ages. It does not mean that every kind of fear is blessed. There is a fear lest evil or injury come upon us from men. There is no happiness in this fear. The fear of man bringing a snare, instead of bringing blessedness. Ay, so unhappy is this kind of fear, that they who have it may be classed with the worst prisoners in the eternal prison-house, if their fear hinder them from drinking the cup of salvation—"the fearful and unbelieving" spoken of in Rev. xxi. 8. There is another kind of fear which brings no happiness with it, viz., *fear lest evil come upon us from the Hand of God.* Such was Israel's fear at Sinai. Such was the fear of Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit. This is "a fear that has torment." . . . But the fear of our text is that of those who are "*fearers of the Lord,*" who possess loving, childlike confidence in Him, mingled with such reverence that they dread nothing so much as the loss of his favour. . . . This fear leads them to a circumspect walk, to jealousy over their own hearts, to abstain from all appearance of evil. They will not risk offending the God whose loving-kindness is better than life. . . . It is a fear lest He be not glorified in them, and by them every day of their life. Surely, "Happy is the man" that thus "feareth always."—*A. A. B.*

I thought upon my sins, and I was sad,
My soul was troubled sore and fill'd with pain;
But then I thought on Jesus and was glad,
My weary grief was turn'd to joy again.

DECEMBER 8.

"Put me not to rebuke, O Lord, in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy heavy displeasure."—Ps. xxxviii. 1.

It is one of the earliest symptoms of genuine repentance, that there is entertained a sense of sin, so dishonouring to God that it deserves unlimited punishment. God will appear righteous in taking vengeance: this is the discovery, the unhesitating conviction of the individual, in whose mind are the workings of genuine repentance. You must at once perceive, that to view sin in its true light, is to recognize the perfect justice of God in punishing, and His unbounded love in pardoning. Had there been no arrangement made on behalf of the fallen, so that the whole world were abandoned to the second and ever-during death, the equity of the procedure would be felt and acknowledged by the man taught the evil nature of sin. But when informed that as the result of the Mediator's interference, God can now be great and yet the justifier, his newly-acquired feelings as to what sin is, and what sin deserves, will cause him to be overwhelmed with amazement and admiration.

Canon Melvill.

Have mercy, Lord, on me,
As Thou wert ever kind;
Let me, oppress with loads of guilt,
Thy wonted mercy find.

Wash off my foul offence,
And cleanse me from my sin,
For I confess my crime, and see
How great my guilt has been.

DECEMBER 9.

"The meditation of my heart shall be of understanding."—Ps. xlix. 3.

Of all duties, there is, perhaps, none less heeded than that of Christian meditation. . . . It is a beautiful incident which we find narrated of Isaac, that he went to meditate in the fields at eventide; and no man who ever wandered forth from the busy hum of cities, and secured himself in one of nature's solitudes whilst the twilight was mantling the earth, can have failed to have been conscious of a soothing and elevating influence in the scene and in the hour. . . . But, without calling in the aids of material scenery, it would be a possible, and undoubtedly a most profitable thing, that we should set apart a time for meditation—an hour which we might call our own, and which should be faithfully given to converse with the spiritual world. . . . Prayer is not a duty to be entered upon rashly and without preparation. If we pass into the Almighty's presence, reeking, as it were, of the earth, not pausing on the threshold to compose and solemnize the mind by a deliberate act of reflection and examination, it can hardly be wondered at that we find slight, if any comfort, in drawing nigh unto our Father which is in Heaven.—*Canon Melvill.*

The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree,
And seem by Thy sweet bounty made
For those who follow Thee.

DECEMBER 10.

"One that feared God, with all his house."—ACTS x. 2.

PIETY, like the sun, communicates itself to all around it. Every family is a little kingdom, of which the master is prince; it is a little flock, of which the master is the shepherd, appointed by Heaven to govern it in righteousness, and to guide it in the way of peace. Such is the true use of that power which God hath granted unto men, from him that ruleth over millions, to him that hath only a single servant. The manners of a family depend upon those of the master. His principles and practices soon diffuse themselves through the house, and the piety or profaneness, the sobriety or intemperance, the sloth or diligence of servants, discover to the world the nature of that fountain from which they flow. "Cornelius feared God with all his house." He set a good example, and took care that they should follow it. He honoured the Name of God himself, and it was not blasphemed by his domestics. He feared God with *all* his house; there was not one wicked or disorderly person in it. And now recollect who this man was. He was a soldier; he was a Roman. How will his example be held up at the day of judgment to the condemnation of Christians who have never thought of following it!—*Bishop Horne.*

Oh! let my house a temple be,
  That I and mine may sing
Hosanna to Thy Majesty,
  And praise our heavenly King.

DECEMBER 11.

"The friendship of the world is enmity with God."—JAMES iv. 4.

THIS, truly, is alarming language. But that merciful parent, who would rather win us to our duty, must sometimes alarm us into happiness. Let us only rest assured, that there is not a terror of the Lord, which is not winged by mercy; and then the shaft which penetrates, will wound us but to heal. To renounce the world, to tear it from our hearts, to trample it under feet; to do this, or to forfeit eternal bliss, and meet our eternal condemnation; this indeed appears a harsh word, and who may hear it? But, let us pause a moment. What is the world? Is it that fair and wondrous fabric, which started into being at the creative word, when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy, and the Maker of all, with tranquil majesty, pronounced that all was "very good"? . . . Are we to forego our occupation in this mighty sphere; to cease to be men, that we may become Christians? God forbid; this is God's world: and to despise it were to fly in the face of its Maker. But there is indeed a world, conformity to which is everlasting ruin: that world degraded and debased by wicked spirits, that distracted scene of impassioned conflict and misery; but through which the faithful Christian is privileged to move, like the three children through the burning furnace, loose and unhurt.—*Bishop Jebb.*

Guide Thou my way, who art Thyself
My everlasting end;
That every step, or swift or slow,
Still to Thyself may tend.

DECEMBER 12.

"Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."—LUKE xii. 40.

To put this command of our Saviour into practice, these few hints will be worth your remembering. Lose not the sight of death, and forget not that it may come when you least think of it. You will then be apt to make good use of the present time; for who knows how short it may be? You will take every occasion of doing what you can; for who can assure you that you shall ever have another? You will be sober and temperate, lest "that day" should overtake *you*, as it has done many a one before you. You will be more patient under afflictions which God appoints for your good, since these cannot last very long. You will be kind and charitable according to your power, knowing that you are very soon to go to the treasure which you have laid up in Heaven. You will more readily forgive all that have offended you; for why should you be enemies, when in a very little time you expect to meet in paradise? You will be inclined to be just to all men, and wrong none; for who would hazard his soul for that which he must soon leave behind him? But is this care and concern necessary for all? Our Lord saith, "What I say unto you, I say unto *all*, Watch!"—*Bishop Wilson.*

'Tis not for a man to trifle! Life is brief,
And sin is here.
Our age is but the falling of a leaf—
A dropping tear.
We have no time to sport away the hours,
And must be earnest in a world like ours.

DECEMBER 13.

"That your faith and hope might be in God."—1 PET. i. 21.

CAN we imagine it a very happy thing, to be high and prosperous in this world, to swim in affluence and pleasure? Can we take it a great misery to be mean and low, to struggle with wants and straits here; seeing the Fountain of all Happiness purposely condescended to so forlorn a state, and was pleased to become so deep a sufferer? If with devout eyes of our mind we behold our Lord hanging on a cross, groaning under smart anguish of pain, encompassed with all sorts of degradation, yielding (as it was foretold of Him) "His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them who plucked off the hair;" will not the thought of such a spectacle dim the lustre of all earthly grandeur and beauty, damp the sense of all carnal delights, and dispose our minds to be sober, placing our happiness in things of another nature; seeking our content in matters of higher importance; preferring obedience to the will of God, before compliance with the desires of men: according to that precept of St. Peter, "Forasmuch then as Christ had suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; so as no longer to live the remaining time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God?"—*I. Barrow, D.D.*

When I survey the wondrous cross
  On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
  And pour contempt on all my pride.

DECEMBER 14.

"As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word."—
1 PET. ii. 2.

EVERY part of the sacred volume teems with instruction, acting, if rightly heard and understood, on our hopes and fears; one while rebuking and chastising; another while consoling and healing; weaning us from our sins, strengthening our weakness, and ministering to the growth of our faith, hope, and charity. The seed is the Word of God, and every seed which falls upon you, every chapter which you read, and every lesson which you hear, contains within it its germ of fruitfulness and increase. But the question is, What is the quality of the soil on which it has been cast? Has it fallen by the wayside? on stony ground? among thorns and briers? or in an honest and good heart? A mind awakened by the Spirit of Grace; attentive and patient, willing to be taught, and desirous of improvement; sorrowing for past sins, repenting from dead works, receiving with faith and hope its Saviour's messages of pardon and peace, trembling at the judgments, and rejoicing in the mercies of God?—*Bishop Bethell.*

Who can tell the pleasure,
Who recount the treasure,
By Thy Word imparted
To the simple-hearted?

Oh, that we discerning
Its most holy learning,
Lord may love and fear Thee,
Evermore be near Thee!

DECEMBER 15.

"Fear not, for I am with thee."—ISA. xliii. 5.

LIFE is full of cares, beset with difficulties. What heart is there that has not some secret bitterness, some painful solicitude, of which it would gladly be relieved? It lies down with the man at night, it rises with him in the morning; it is a weight upon his spirit that subdues, if not consumes it, day by day. But beloved, however it be with others, it ought to be so with you, that are Christ's. You have a refuge which others have not; you may take all to One, who says, I care for you; One that bids you come to Him, and let *Him* care instead of you. . . . O! be persuaded to try Him whether he will not be as good as His word. Trust Him with this day's anxieties; and, if it be for once only, see if He will fail your hope, though it be ever so faint and feeble. Oh, no: He has never failed them that seek Him. He has said, and He does as He says, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."—*Dean Goode.*

Cling to the Mighty One,
  Cling in thy grief;
Cling to the Holy One,
  He gives relief;
Cling to the Gracious One,
  Cling in thy pain;
Cling to the Faithful One,
  He will sustain.

DECEMBER 16.

"Charity shall cover the multitude of sins."—1 PET. iv. 8.

To guard ourselves against want of charity, either in thought, word, or deed, we should frequently examine our own hearts in private, and possess our souls with a due consideration of our own manifold offences against God, and against our neighbours; and of the many circumstances which lessen the merit of those which seem our best actions. We shall be thus led, by an almost natural process, to apply to the conduct of other men the same candid and favourable judgment which we desire in our own case to be employed: and the very habit of self-examination, which is naturally produced by self-accusation, will make us more thoroughly aware of the palliative circumstances which may be urged for human error. By keeping our attention fixed on the ten thousand talents, which we owe to God, we shall leave ourselves no time to be too mindful of the trifling offences of our brethren against us; and as we shall be ready to do good, not hoping for any earthly return, so we shall be not disappointed, when no earthly return is made to us.—*Bishop Heber.*

Hark! 'tis the music of a thousand rills,
Some through the grove, some down the sloping hills
Winding a secret or an open course,
And all supplied from one eternal source—
'Tis truth divine exhibited on earth,
Gives charity her being and her birth.

DECEMBER 17.

"He careth for you."—1 PET. v. 7.

IT is through our blessed Saviour alone that we can hope for any solid consolation in our afflictions. Weak helpless man may speak to the outward ear, but God alone can speak to the heart. At His feet let us then henceforth pour out all the bitterness of our souls; upon Him henceforth, as he graciously invites us, *cast all our cares; for He careth for us.* The day will come to us all, when, casting our eyes back on the space we shall have passed, all traces of joy or of sorrrow, of pleasure or of pain, of health or sickness, riches or want, shall be utterly effaced, or not to be distinguished from the impression of our last night's dream: an abode is preparing for us where they will all be alike unfelt and forgotten. But to those who shall have enjoyed the one, and submitted to the other, in the fear of God, and under a sense of His Providence, another scene shall be opened; a new order of things. In His holy habitation, they will behold Him to whom they had looked up with the eye of faith. . . . "By Him shall all tears be wiped from all eyes. With Him shall be no more sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things shall be passed away."—*Bishop O'Beirne.*

Oh! let me glow beneath those sacred beams,
And after, bathe me in those silver streams;
To Thee alone my sorrows shall appeal:
Hath earth a wound too hard for heaven to heal?

DECEMBER 18.

"Who is among you that feareth the Lord . . . that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?"—ISA. l. 10.

DISCOMFORT not thyself too much, my son, with the disappearance of grace, during the hour of thy temptation. It is no otherwise with thee than with a tree in winter season, whose sap is run down to the root, wherein there is no more show of the life of vegetation by any buds or blossoms that it might put forth, than if it were dead: yet, when the sun returns, and sends forth his comfortable beams in the spring, it buds out afresh; and bewrays that vital juice, which long lay hidden in the earth. No otherwise than with the hearth of some good housewife, which is, towards night, swept up; and hideth the fire under the heap of her ashes: a stranger would think it were quite out: here is no appearance of light, or heat, or smoke; but by that time she hath stirred it up a little, the bright gleeds show themselves, and are soon raised to a flame. Stay but till the spring, when the Sun of Righteousness shall call up thy moisture into thy branches; stay but till the morning, when the fire of grace shall be drawn forth and quickened, and thou shalt find cause to say, as Jacob said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not;" and as Isaiah said, "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."—*Bishop Hall.*

Oh, let me then at length be taught,
What I am still so slow to learn,
That God is love and changes not,
Nor knows the shadow of a turn.

DECEMBER 19.

"And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them."—ACTS xix. 6.

ONE fountain waters a whole garden, and one and the same rain comes down in every part of the world, and becomes white in the lily, red in the rose, purple in violets and hyacinths. . . . It does not change as it descends, and become first one thing, then another; but applying itself to the condition of that which is to receive it, it becomes to each what is suitable. So also does the Holy Spirit, being of our indirect nature, distribute grace "to every one severally as He wills," and as the dry tree when it partakes of water puts forth shoots, so also the soul that is in sin, being endued by means of repentance with the Holy Spirit, puts forth clusters of righteousness. And while the Spirit is of our nature, yet many are the excellences which, by the fear of God, and in the name of Christ, He works out—differently in each case, but not diverse from Himself, as it is written, "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."—*St. Cyril of Jerusalem.*

Spirit of truth and love,
Life-giving Holy Dove,
Speed forth Thy flight:
Move on the waters' face,
Spreading the beams of grace,
And in earth's darkest place
Let there be light!

DECEMBER 20.

"A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."—ISA. liii. 3.

ALL that Christ came for was, or was mingled with, suffering; for all those little joys which God sent, either to recreate His person, or to illustrate His office, were abated, or attended with afflictions; God being more careful to establish in Him the covenant of sufferings, than to refresh His sorrows. Presently after the angels had finished their hallelujahs, He was forced to fly to save His life; and the air became full of shrieks of the desolate mothers of Bethlehem for their dying babes. God had no sooner made Him illustrious with a voice from Heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him in the waters of Baptism, but He was delivered over to be tempted and assualted by the devil in the wilderness. His transfiguration was a bright ray of glory; but then also He entered into a cloud, and was told a sad story, what He was to suffer at Jerusalem. And upon Palm Sunday, when He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, and was adorned with the acclamations of a King and a God, He wet the palms with His tears, sweeter than the drops of manna or the little pearls of Heaven that descended upon Mount Hermon; weeping in the midst of this triumph over obstinate, perishing, and malicious Jerusalem.—*Bishop Jeremy Taylor.*

Hate the sin that cost so dear,
Love the God that loved thee so;
Weep, but weeping, watch and fear,
Lest that fountain freshly flow.

DECEMBER 21.

St. Thomas.

"These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ."
—JOHN xx. 31.

BE watchful against all symptoms of unbelief; live with the recollection that the unseen world, with all its powers and realities, is not far from every one of us. It is but as it were a thin veil that hides it from us; and in the holy Sacraments, Christ has condescended to our weakness, by giving outward visible signs of that inward spiritual grace which we so continually need. We should notice that St. Thomas's case is an instance how God overrules men's faults to the good of His Church. That Apostle was wrong to doubt as He did! and yet the doubts which he expressed, and the evidence which Christ was pleased to grant him, are to us a confirmation of our faith. Thereby we see that Christ's Resurrection was not blindly and hastily admitted, but the strictest possible proof was required of its reality. Moreover, the conviction produced by our Lord's condescension in the mind of St. Thomas, drew from him that noble confession, "My Lord and my God:" a proof of Christ's Divinity, which nothing can gainsay; and an example to us, not only of candour in surrendering doubts and objections, but of that affectionate homage and devout worship which is due to our risen Saviour.

Bishop Trower.

Thou vexing thoughts may seem to last,
Let not thy soul be quite o'ercast:—
Soon will He show thee all His wounds and say,
Long have I known thy name—know thou My way.

DECEMBER 22.

"And now, little children, abide in Him."—1 JOHN ii. 28.

BLESSED things are Prayer, and Sacraments, and watchfulness, and rules of life, and self-discipline, and self-denial, when they occupy their right place in the spiritual system, as means, channels, and instruments; but if they be unduly magnified, so as to cover the whole field of view; if we for a moment allow our minds to regard them as sources of grace, and trust in them to work in us sanctity, we shall be as utterly disappointed in them as the poor woman who had the issue of blood was with the many physicians, from whom she had suffered many things, but never brought away a cure. Mark me, reader—our sanctification is in Christ, not independent of Him, and therefore not to be had independently. Touch His sacred Person in simple faith that in Him doth all fulness dwell—fulness of light and love, of holy tempers, holy impulses, and of all the fruits of the Spirit—and the virtue which is in Him shall instantly begin to flow, through the channel which faith has opened into your soul. This is His own teaching, not ours, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me."

E. M. Goulburn, D.D.

Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life:—
  Grant us that Way to know,
That Truth to keep, that Life to win,
  Whose joys eternal flow.

DECEMBER 23.

"Call the Sabbath a delight."—ISA. lviii. 13.

IF there is one circumstance which more than another ought to call forth the grateful acknowledgments of our souls for the dispensation of the Gospel under which we have been born, it is the observation of the general diffusion of happiness and ease, and the remembrance of that recreation to the worn-out mind, which the regular recurrence of the Sabbath affords. I have often heard it remarked by those, to whom the sacred day of rest had become a season of hallowed delight, that it seemed to their eyes as if, on the Sabbath, the sun did shine more bright, the works of God appear more beautiful, the fields more fresh, the flowers more sweet, and all the face of nature to wear an unusual and a fitting stillness. It is not indeed so. It is only that we are apt to think thus, because our minds are attuned to order, and to piety, and to contemplation. . . . The goodness of God and the beauty of holiness force themselves into our thoughts, and in the fulness of the feeling we almost fancy that the inanimate creation has been taught to sympathize with the benevolence of our own souls, and to remember, like ourselves, the Sabbath of God.

Christopher Benson.

O Day most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
Th' indorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a friend, and with His blood;
The couch of Time; Care's balm and bay;
The week were dark but for Thy light:
Thy touch doth show the way.

DECEMBER 24.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come."—ISA. lx. 1.

BEFORE Christ's coming into the world, Gospel grace was under a legal administration. When the sun is approaching us in the morning, though its body be under the horizon, and in another hemisphere, yet then we see the dawning and glimmering of its light. So was it in the Church; though the Sun of Righteousness was not risen upon them with His full brightness, yet they then saw and enjoyed the dawn of our perfect day; and those Jews who lived as it were in the other hemisphere of time before Christ's coming, were as much under grace as now we are, though not under such clear and glorious dispensations of it. They had then the same Christ to save them, the same promises to support them, the same faith to appropriate both unto them, as now we have. *They* were under as great an impossibility of obtaining life by the deeds of the law as *we* are; and *we* under as strict an injunction to fulfil the commands of the law, as was ever on *them* imposed. The only difference between them and us consists in this, that they see the Sun of Righteousness under a cloud; we openly;—they, by its reflection; we directly.

Bishop Hopkins.

Great Sun of Righteousness, arise!
  Bless the dark world with Heavenly light;
Thy Gospel makes the simple wise,
  Thy laws are pure, Thy judgments right.

DECEMBER 25.

Nativity.

"God with us."—MATT. i. 23.

THE intensity of this day's blessed mystery is, "God with us;" that, to retrace His image upon us, He, who is the co-eternal Image of the Father, took us unto Himself, and stamped again His likeness upon us, by taking the likeness of our sinfulness; that us, who were aforetime alienated from God, He made to be at one with God, by Himself becoming one of us, and giving us of His Oneness with the Father; us, who were a blot in the creation of God, outcasts from His sight, He has brought back into the harmony and order of His obedient creatures, uniting us to the Father in Himself; replacing our deadness by Himself, who is Life; our darkness by Himself, who is Light; our blindness by Himself, who is Wisdom; our corruption by His incorruption; our sinfulness by His holiness; our emptiness by His fulness, enlarging our finiteness to receive God, who is Infinite. Where shall be the bond or measure of His mercies, or of our praise? Our nature in itself the last, made, so to say, the Union between God and His creatures! . . . Oh, seek we then, one by one, while He may be found, our Lord, who, on this day, sought us!—*E. B. Pusey, D.D.*

Veil'd in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel!

DECEMBER 26.

St. Stephen.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God."—ACTS vii. 59.

As the interests of religion and virtue require that due regard be paid to the memory of pious and good persons; and as they who have laid down their lives for God and their duty, have given the strongest proofs of their attachment to the noblest cause; so the Christian Church has, from the beginning, shown distinguished honours to those professors of its holy faith, who have sealed their testimony to it with their blood. The first martyr, or witness, of this kind, after the blessed Jesus Himself, was St. Stephen, a man "full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and of power, and of wisdom," whose death is related in the text. But admiring them is nothing, unless we also imitate them in their steady adherence to God and their duty, in their contempt of worldly advantages and pleasures, losses and punishments; in their meekness under injuries, in their resignation under pains and afflictions, in their love to their fellow-Christians and fellow-creatures, in their lively faith of a future recompense. For thus shall we "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; and be followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

Archbishop Secker.

They climb the steep ascent of heaven
  Through peril, toil, and pain;
O God! to us may grace be given
  To follow in their train!

DECEMBER 27.

St. John Evangelist.

"Follow thou Me."—JOHN xxi. 22.

"HOWEVER I may purpose to dispose of John," saith our Lord; "whatever may be My intentions respecting the manner in which he is to glorify God, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me!" And is not a journey like this sufficient to engage our undivided cares and attention? Have we time to spare to attend to the concerns of other men, or to stand idle ourselves, while we behold the progress of our neighbours? It was doubtless the voice of everlasting Wisdom which answered to the curiosity of Peter, "What hast thou to do with the destiny of another? Follow thou Me." For, in one respect we must, whether we will or no, follow Him. We may not be treading the paths which He has ordained; but there is one dismal voyage which must be made by us all; and when our day of life is sinking, we shall wish that our attention had been directed to the examination of our own hearts and condition! Consider this, ye that forget God; nor ever close your eyes without a prayer to Him through the merits of Jesus Christ, that whether at midnight or at cock-crowing you are called to follow Him, He may find you prepared for your journey; and may conduct you to eternal joy.—*Bishop Heber.*

Sick or healthful, slave or free,
  Wealthy, or despised and poor,
What is that to him or thee,
  So his love to Christ endure?
When the shore is won at last,
Who will count the billows past?

DECEMBER 28.

Holy Innocents.

"All of you are children of the Most High."—Ps. lxxxii. 6.

THEY who receive Christ as their king, and who would be fellow-citizens with Him and His saints, must be as little children; pure and unworldly, lowly and reverent, docile and submissive, receiving meekly the chastisement of their heavenly Father, and not resenting the injuries they may suffer at man's hand. And they must expect to suffer with Christ, if they would also reign with Him. Some measure of outward suffering they must expect from the opposition of the world, its ridicule or neglect, if not more direct persecution; and we should bless God that He has now so long and so greatly "restrained the wrath" of such as would persecute God's saints, if they united the power with the malice of Herod. But there is an inward crucifixion of sin which we must earnestly resolve on accomplishing. Nor can that mortification of corrupt nature be carried on without a painful struggle; so painful, perhaps, that we may at times think with feelings, even akin to envy, on these happy children, who had so early a fellowship with Christ in His sufferings; and by a short though sharp endurance of the Cross, passed into the joy of their Lord, before they had borne the burden and heat of the day.—*Bishop Trower.*

Do Thou, Lord! midst pleasure or woe,
Still for heaven our spirits prepare;
And shortly we also shall know
And feel what it is to be there.

DECEMBER 29.

"Behold I come quickly."—REV. xxii. 20.

"THESE sayings are faithful and true"—to be believed and realized. Try to realize them. Just think, if for a moment only, what would be your thoughts, your feelings, your memories, your fears, or your joys, were He to come *now*. What would you think of sin—the greatest or the least—open and going before to judgment, or secret and torn from its concealment in the folds of the heart, and spread out in the light of the eternal day? What of the world now? The supreme arbiter and standard by which men and things are measured, when you see its fashion and its splendour melting away like snow-wreaths before the rising sun? What of a neglected Bible, when you find that every jot and every tittle have been turned into accomplished fact? What of being ashamed of Christ now, when you see Him on the throne of His glory; the homage of a subjected creation laid at His feet? What of trusting Him, following, working, sacrificing for Him, when you see His smile beaming on those who in faith and patience have been looking for Him, and hear now the music of his voice bidding them welcome into the joy of their Lord? Now it is just realizing these things; inquiring concerning each thing we plan, or propose, or do, "How will it appear in 'that day?'" It is by doing this habitually that we shall come best disposed to this blessed call. The life answering rather than the lips, "Even so come, Lord Jesus!"—*Francis Tyrrell.*

Return! return! come in Thy power and glory
With all Thy risen saints and angel throng;
Bring to a close Time's strange mysterious story,
How long dost Thou delay, O Lord, how long?

DECEMBER 30.

"We all do fade as a leaf."—ISA. lxiv. 6.

THIS is as though a voice from Heaven did speak, "Prepare to meet thy God." Surely His correcting hand is impressing upon your heart a just sense of the vanity of this shifting scene of life, in order that He may receive you unto Himself purified by chastening. He acts as a father. With the wise care, and the tender anxiety of a parent, He is gradually weaning you from things temporal, that you finally lose not the things eternal. True it is, that with all the fondness of a nursling, hanging yet upon its mother's breast, you naturally cling to this world; her caresses you covet; her smiles you look for; her endearments you repose upon. But 'tis time now to put away childish things: the realities of eternity await you! You will soon be called to act in new scenes, as an immortal being: you will be engaged in new duties with the spirits of the just made perfect, and with them share, as you humbly hope, new joys, even the everlasting joys of Heaven.—*J. J. James.*

Snatch'd sudden from th' avenging rod,
Safe in the bosom of thy God,
How wilt thou then look back and smile
On thoughts that bitterest seem'd erewhile,
And bless the pangs that made thee see
This was no world of rest for thee!

DECEMBER 31.

Last Day of the Year.

"The great day of His wrath."—REV. vi. 17.

LET us recollect, as often as the years come to their close, that we are one year nearer to that day; and that as surely as we have reached the end of one year, we shall also witness the end of time, when "the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man will hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of His wrath is come." Let all who are unprepared believe these things and awake. You are swiftly, though silently, floating down the stream of time. The years are passing away, and you have as yet done nothing. Think now, at the end of the year, to what little purpose you have lived hitherto, and bless God that He hath spared you so long. If it please Him that you should enter upon another year, be prepared to begin it with new purposes and new views, that you may be able to say, "*I thought on my ways, I made haste and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.—Henry Martyn.*

. . . . Old year, farewell! I watch thee dying,
Struggling in weakness for thy latest breath;
I catch the lessons thou would'st teach me, lying
In the calm sleep of death;
And these thy last faint words while morn doth brighten,
"Up and be doing; lay in golden store;
Till the new harvest of the world shall whiten,
And Time shall be no more."

Advent.

"Behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts."—MAL. iii. 1.

IT was Christ, the promised Redeemer, to whom the prophet pointed; for in the same verse He is designated as "The Lord." "He shall come" to proclaim the Gospel of pardon and peace, to instruct the ignorant, to bring life and immortality to light, to give His life a ransom for many, and, by a glorious Resurrection and Ascension, to open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. The Prophet therefore by Divine command calls on the whole world to look for the Lord about to come, bearing this olive-branch of peace and reconciliation. May we receive Him with joyful acclaim, and never despise or neglect His message of mercy. There is another aspect of Christ's Advent. He shall appear the second time. Our Saviour says, Then shall the Son of Man come, and His holy angels with Him, to judge all nations. The Apostolic writers warn us of the same truth, and St. John the Divine realizes the awful scene. The Judge, the books of remembrance, the assembled throng, all appear. Did Christ come according to our Prophet's announcement? So surely shall He come again to judge the world in righteousness. "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" Oh, may we live as we shall then wish we had lived! May we live each day as though the last trumpet were sounding in our ears, "Arise, and come to judgment!"

Rev. H. Clissold.

Make haste, O man, to live,
  Thy time is almost o'er:
Oh, sleep not! dream not! but arise,
  The Judge is at the door.

Ash-Wednesday.

"When ye fast, be not as the hypocrites."—MATT. vi. 16.

THE world thinks it miserable folly to abstain from lawful and, as it says, innocent pleasures and delights; and such hold on us has the opinion of the world, that we are often half ashamed of owning that Christ does call us to deny ourselves even in things lawful and innocent. But is not this being ashamed of Him and His Cross? Because the world calls such self-denial needless or absurd, are we to forget the kind of life which Christ and all His true servants led on earth? Are we to be ashamed of owning that we endeavour, though with feeble steps, to follow them along their way of faith and hope? The season of Lent would be to us a great opportunity of improvement, if we would thus employ it as a season of self-discipline. It calls us away from the love of sense, the love of money, the love of human praise, the love of present comfort. It sets before us the example of our Lord's fast, temptation, and passion. It bids us turn aside and see what is beyond the grave—the crown of glory, "the rest which remaineth for the people of God."—*Bishop Trower.*

Christ leads us through no darker rooms
  Than He went through before;
He that unto God's kingdom comes,
  Must enter by His door.

Good Friday.

"For the transgression of My people was He smitten."—
ISA. liii. 8.

HE bare sin as a heavy burden; so the word *bearing* imports in general, and those two words used by the prophet, Isaiah liii. 4, to which these allude, imply the bearing of some great mass or load. And surely that which pressed Him so sore who upholds Heaven and earth, no other could have sustained or surmounted. Was it, think you, the pain of that common outside of His death, though very painful, that drew such a word from Him, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" No, it was this burden of sin, the first of which was committed in the garden of Eden, that then began to be fastened upon His shoulders in the Garden of Gethsemane. This was the cup He trembled at more than gall and vinegar, or any part of His external sufferings: it was the bitter cup of wrath due to sin, which the Father put into His hand and caused Him to drink, the very same thing that is here called the bearing our sins in His body. Now amongst these were even those sins we call small. If the greater were as the spear that pierced His side, the less were as the nails that pierced His hands and His feet, and the very least as the thorns that were set on His precious head.—"The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all"—"that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness."—*Archbishop Leighton.*

O shame beyond the bitterest thought
  That evil spirit ever framed,
That sinners know what Jesus wrought,
  Yet feel their haughty hearts untamed—
That souls in refuge, holding by the Cross,
Should wince and fret at this world's little loss!

Easter Day.

"Sown in dishonour . . . raised in glory."—1 Cor. xv. 43.

He that, while He lived, was a "man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" whom the world despised, hated, persecuted, and at last crucified; yet being for His obedience beloved of God, "was raised by Him the third day from the dead;" and then, that body which had so lately been torn and mangled by all the ways that malice or cruelty could invent, is now no longer subject to want or misery. The scourges that had ploughed His back but three days before, the crown of thorns that had pierced His temples, and the nails and spear that had wounded Him so unmercifully, did not in the least hinder that body from being raised in glory. And this, the Spirit of God assures us, shall be the reward of every faithful member of Jesus Christ. "This corruptible body shall put on incorruption, and this mortal body shall put on immortality." "May the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—*Bishop Wilson.*

Rise, heart; thy Lord is risen, sing His praise
Without delays,
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
With Him may'st rise;
That, as His death calcined thee to dust,
His life may make thee gold, and much more just.

Ascension.

"This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner."—ACTS i. 11.

BECAUSE the ascension of our Lord was after His travails, the farewell He took of the world, His doings and sayings at this time should have at least our Christian attention. St. Mark tells us that He was giving His Apostles their commission to "preach the Gospel to every creature;" and telling them that they should have power, as the working of miracles and the like, to confirm this teaching by: "so after He had spoken this unto them He was received up into Heaven." St. Luke tells us, that He gathered them together, commanding them not to depart from Jerusalem, but there to "wait for the promise of the Father, which," said He, "you heard of Me." And when He had spoken these things, "while He was even now," as the same Evangelist says in another place, "blessing them, He departed from thence, and was carried up into Heaven;" for a cloud took Him out of their sight, and they returned to Jerusalem from Mount Olivet; and when they were come into an upper chamber, "they all continued in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus."—*Christopher Sutton.*

Chains of my heart, avaunt! I say—
  I will arise, and in the strength of love
Pursue the bright track ere it fade away,
  My Saviour's pathway to His home above:
Sure, when I reach the point where earth
  Melts into nothing from th' uncumber'd sight,
Heaven will overcome th' attraction of my birth
  And I shall sink in yonder sea of light.

Whitsuntide.

"Led by the Spirit of God."—ROM. viii. 14.

THE best ground of comfort and confidence which a man can feel, that he is God's son, and abiding in His favour, is that he is "led by the Spirit of God." Nor is it difficult for any one to discover whether this be his case, or no: since "the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." If, therefore, a man find these graces in his own heart and conduct, he may be sure that they must be planted there by God; the fruits of His good Spirit: and that he, being led by the Spirit, *is* the son of God. And as this is their support and comfort, so it is a caution to the best and wisest, that from that blessed eminence they may at any moment fall: and consequently no care can be too great to preserve themselves from the sin of grieving the Holy Spirit of God, by whose presence in their hearts they are sealed to the day of redemption. Be diligent, therefore, in using those outward means of grace, whereby God sanctifies His children from the world: be studious to walk where the Spirit leads, lest that blessed Spirit be withdrawn; and be lowly and humble before the Most High, since it is to such only that an increase or continuance of the Divine favour is promised.—*Bishop Heber.*

Come, Lord! come, Wisdom, Love, and Power,
  Open our ears to hear:
Let us not miss th' accepted hour;
  Save, Lord, by love or fear!

Trinity Sunday.

"There are Three that bear record in heaven."—1 JOHN v. 7.

As in waters there is a fountain or well-head, then there is the spring that boils up out of that fountain, and then there is the stream that flows both from the fountain and the spring, and yet all these are but one and the same water, so here, God the Father is the fountain of the Deity, the Son as the spring that boils up out of the fountain; and the Holy Ghost the stream that flows from both, and yet all Three are but One and the same God. The same may also be explained by another familiar instance: the sun, you know, begets beams, and from the sun and beams together proceed both light and heat; so God the Father begets the Son, and from the Father and Son together proceeds the Spirit of knowledge and grace. But as the sun is not before the beams, nor the beams before the light and heat, but all together, so neither is the Father before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghost; but only in order and relation to one another, in which only respect the Father is the first Person in the Trinity.—*Bishop Beveridge.*

Eternal One, Almighty Trine!
Since Thou art ours, and we are Thine,
By all Thy love did once resign,
By all the grace Thy heavens still hide,
We pray Thee keep us at Thy side;—
Creator, Saviour, strengthening Guide!

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